

# Early Aryans to Swaraj

## 2

## MAGADHA and GUPTA EMPIRES



S.R. BAKSHI • S. GAJRANI • HARI SINGH

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**EARLY ARYANS TO SWARAJ – 2**

**MAGADHA AND GUPTA EMPIRES**

This One



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# EARLY ARYANS TO SWARAJ

Volume – 2

Magadha and Gupta Empires

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**SARUP & SONS**

**NEW DELHI - 110002**



*Published by*  
**SARUP & SONS**  
4740/23, Ansari Road  
Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002  
Tel. : 23281029, 23244664, 51010989  
Fax : 23277098  
E-mail : sarupandsons@hotmai.com.

*Magadha and Gupta Empires*

© Author

1st Edition - 2005

ISBN 81-7625-537-8 (Set)

PRINTED IN INDIA

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Published by Prabhat Kumar Sharma for Sarup & Sons,  
Laser Typesetting at Chitra Computers and Printed  
at Roshan Offset Printers, Delhi.

# Preface

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This encyclopaedic study is a comprehensive survey of Indian history which has been dealt with three major parts. The Part I deals with the ancient history of our civilisation, culture, art, administration and rulers at various stages. Commencing with the Aryan era, it ends with the Rajput supremacy including various aspects of Buddhism, Jainism, Mauryas, Kushans, Gupta rulers and Rajput dynasty. Their achievements have been highlighted in several ways. The expansion of their empire and new innovations in administration are their unique achievements.

In Part II we have collected the material from several academic institutions, viz., Delhi University Library, Sapru House Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Indian Council of Historical Research Library Sahitya Akademi Library and Jamia Millia Islamia Library. We have also sought academic help from the writing of eminent social scientists: we feel much beholden to them.

We are thankful to our publisher for the publication of these volumes without any delay.

The second series of volumes have deep learning on Medieval India which commences with the dawn of Muslim rule in our sub-continent. The slave dynasty, Khiljis, Tughluqs, the Mughals including Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, Sher Shah Suri and his dynasty, the Marathas and the downfall of Mughal Empire have been included in these volumes.

In Part II we have collected the material from several academic institutions, viz, the Sapru House Library, Indian Council of Historical Research Library, Sahitya Akademi Library, Central Secretariat Library, Delhi University Library, Jamia Millia Islamia Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and Jawaharlal Nehru University Library. We have used the relevant material from the writings of eminent social scientists and for this academic support we feel much beholden to them.

We are thankful to our publisher for the publication of these volumes without any delay.

The third series of this Encyclopaedia have deep bearing on the British rule in our sub-continent which continued upto 1947. The early foreign powers like Portuguese, French, Dutch and the British had to struggle for several decades, but ultimately the British were successful in establishing their supremacy in west India, South India, East India, Central India and North-West of India.

Part II Indeed the East India Company's rule continued upto 1857 when the administration was transferred to the British Government, directly responsible to the Home Government in England.

With the passage of time there were dramatic political developments for about ten decades. The foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885, the passage of institutional Acts in 1909 and 1919, the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the political scene of India in the second year of the global war, the Champaran Satyagraha, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Council-entry programme, the Linon Commission, the Lahore Congress in 1929 and the Complete independence programme, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Constitutional Act of 1935, formation of provincial ministries, the Quit India Movement, Subhas Chandra Bose and the role of INA, role of Muslim League, the Cabinet mission and partition of India in 1947 have been highlighted.

We have collected the material from several academic centres, viz, Sapru House Library, Delhi University Library, Jamia Millia Islamia Library, Central Secretariat Library, Indian Council of

Historical Research Library, Sahitya Akademi Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and Jawaharlal Nehru University Library. We have used the relevant useful material from the writings of eminent historians in order to fill up some gaps in the draft. We feel much beholden to these social scientists.

We are thankful to our publisher. Who has shown much promptness and keenness in publication of these volumes without any delay.

**EDITORS**

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# 1

## The Magadha Empire

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The land we live in, with its two ancient capitals of Girivraja and Pataliputra, has a history which is undoubtedly unique, at any rate, unrivalled not only in India, but perhaps, in the whole world. From whatever point of view we study it, it has something to be proud of. In the domain of spirituality, it was the centre of the activities of religious leaders like Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. The former, related to the royal family of Magadha, spent a considerable portion of his life here, while the all-important moment in the career of the Tathagata, when the supreme knowledge of enlightenment came to that Great Being by virtue of which he attained actual Buddhahood which made him one of the saviours of the world, occurred in Magadha. This alone would invest the land we live in with unprecedented sanctity, not only in the eyes of those vast millions who follow his teachings even now, but also of others. The Jains held a great council at Pataliputra, and the two first Buddhist councils were held in Magadha while the two great teachers amongst the Buddhists, next to Buddha himself, Tissa Moggaliputta and Upagupta, flourished here. The canons of Buddhism were fixed and laid down here, while Asvaghosa, the inspirer of Northern Buddhism known as Mahayanism—that Asvaghosa who “stands at the starting point of all the great currents that renewed and transformed India, towards the beginning of the Christian era,” “poet, musician, preacher, moralist, philosopher, playwright,” hailed from Magadha. Although this land had been placed under a ban by Brahmanas, it was here that the first historical horse-sacrifice was revived and celebrated with appropriate magnificence, testifying to the revival of Brahmanical supremacy. The first economist of India, if not of the world, Kautilya or Chanakya, named also

Visnugupta, was, perhaps, born in this land, and certainly had his school and disciples here, while Kamandaka, who followed in the footsteps of the father of Economics, can also be claimed by us. That the Science of Economics, with which is associated the Science of Politics, was systematically studied here is on record, while the *Mahabharata* testifies to the fact that the ministers of Magadha were learned in the Science of Statecraft. Here Upavarsa and Varsa, Panini and Pingala, Vararuchi and Patanjali, rose to eminence. And, if tradition is to be relied on, Kalidasa was also a native of Magadha. It was in this land that Aryabhata, the father of scientific Astronomy, was born while it was the home of Rsis like Chyavana and Dadhichi. Long before the historical days of Chandragupta Maurya, Magadha could boast of powerful monarchs like Brhadratha, described as handsome, mighty, immensely rich, and matchlessly powerful having an army of three *Aksauhinis*. Jarasandha, whom no contemporary king was able to equal in prowess, "blazing forth above the heads of all those that wore a crown," is admitted by even the panegyrists of his enemies as having robbed all other kings of their splendour, and whom a host of kings followed. At the time of the invasion of the Macedonian hero, here was a king whose very name and fame, frightened the unconquerable soldiers of Alexander the great, while the people of the country were considered as the distinguished in all-India. The nucleus of the first empire in Northern India was formed by the Saisunakas here; and it was Magadha and Magadha alone which could claim sovereignty from Afganistan across the Continent eastward to Bengal, and from the Himalayas to the Central Provinces, while the two great emperors of Northern India, Asoka and Samudra Gupta, sent their victorious banners from Magadha—one to preach to the then civilised world his evangelic mission of Love and *Dhamma*, the other to conquer far-off lands and capitals. And long after, when people were forgetting the glories of Magadha, a king of Magadha, Dharmapala, again stretched his proud arms to conquer Northern India. From Magadha went on missionaries as evangelists of the highest repute, medical men for the treatment of human beings as well as of lower animals, and for the establishment of hospitals; while it was at the capital of Magadha that vivisection was first experimented upon for the cure of incurable diseases. The two very old and widely celebrated residential universities of India, perhaps of the world, had their seats in Magadha—Nalanda belonging to the age of artistic culture and skill, boasting "of a gorgeous and luxurious style of architecture, of a deep

philosophical knowledge," of profound and learned discussions and of rapid progress along the paths of civilisation, and both showing a standard of culture and education which may be emulated by many modern universities. From both, teachers went forth to the north and to the east to inculcate knowledge, and to both flocked students from all parts of Asia to imbibe the highest teachings of Religion and Philosophy. It was here that the skill of the stone-cutter attained perfection and he produced models which, as admitted by the learned author of the *Early History of India*, would be found to be beyond the craftsmanship of the twentieth century. The engineers and architects of the royal house of Magadha could design and construct spacious and lofty edifices, throw massive embankments, equipped with convenient sluices and other appliances of extraordinary engineering skill, handle enormous monoliths, and polish them in a way which is still unsurpassed, excavate commodious chambers with varnished interiors which, even today, would dazzle the eyes of all and build palaces which led people to believe that those must have been built only by superhuman beings and could not have been up reared by human hands. Not only in and around Magadha, but even in distant lands, skilled artists from Magadha were engaged by kings, showing the acme of supremacy the artists had attained in this old land. The Magadhan measure was ordered to be used by the great lawgiver, Manu. It was Magadha which possessed a Government which was better organised than the government of Akbar or Shah Jehan. Magadha had a civilisation and culture in its palmy days, equal if not superior, to that which India attained, eighteen or nineteen hundred years later. This fact has been admitted by historians, and Magadha need not fear any comparison in point of historical interest with any part of India.

Such was Magadha, which was the most famous kingdom in ancient India, and three-fourths of India's early history is the history of Magadha. But this great land, of which we are speaking in strains of unbounded enthusiasm and praise, was regarded with deadly aversion by the Vedic Aryans. The thirtieth Book of the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* enumerating the victims of the *Purusamedha*, makes the god Savita bound to the sacrificial stake a Magadha to be dedicated as sacrifice to the deity of excessive noise. In the *Panchavimsa Brahmana* we are told that they were distinct in culture from the Aryans, while in *Srauta Sutra* there is also a condemnation of them. In the *Aitareya Aranyaka* the people of Magadha are treated as bards, and again, in the



*Samkhayana Aranyaka* it was unusual for a Brahmana to dwell in the territory of Magadha. With none of the one hundred and thirty-three Asvamedhas instituted by Bharata, son of Dusmanta, is associated Magadha.

Indeed, all the earlier and later Vedic texts displayed a marked antipathy towards the people of Magadha, to whom malarial fever was assigned, evidently as a curse, for the land was seemingly considered as not worth living in as being not within the pale of Vedic civilisation. Apparently, the country was not in good repute with the Vedic people, and a Brahmana living then in the Magadha country was called *Brahmabandhu*—a degraded Brahmana. In the Smṛti literature, Magadha was included in the list of countries migration to which was strictly forbidden and a penance was necessary for having gone there. This dislike continued even to the days of Manu, where Magadha is not included by the lawgiver in the list of the Brahmarshi lands. Even as late as in the *Bṛhasya Brahma-Khanda*, it is mentioned that the people of Magadha would be destitute of good manners. And you will be surprised to hear that the land of Magadha even now, is under a ban, for Brahmanas of Mithila will avoid bathing on this side of the Ganges on auspicious occasions.

It may be mentioned that the name Magadha is not actually referred to in the R̥gveda. The word *Kikata* occurs only in one passage in the R̥gveda where it appears as hostile to the singer. The only thing which the R̥gveda mentions about the *Kikatas* is their kine, which the hymnist regretfully mentions as being of no use in sacrifice, though he covets them to use their milk for sacrificial purposes. The term *Kikata* has been used as a synonym for Magadha; and, hence, it has been concluded that the *Kikatas* were a non-Aryan people living in the country now known as Magadha.

It may be observed, in passing, that various European scholars have come to different conclusions regarding the interpretation of this word. E.G. Zimmer asserted that the *Kikatas* were a non-Aryan people living in the land latterly known as Magadha. Weber held that these people were Aryans, though at variance with the other Aryan tribes. Indian commentators also have different views. Yaska in his *Nirukta* refers to the *Kikatas* as living in non-Aryan land. The author of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* identified *Kikata* with Magadha, while the commentator Sṛidhara identified it with *Gaya Pradesa*.

Closely connected with this question and the early history of Magadha, is the mention of the term *Vratya* and his occupation and position, for in many ways, he was connected with Magadha. The name Magadha is brought into a significant connexion with the *Vratya* in a mystic hymn, which has even now, after centuries, not been clearly explained. In the fifteenth book of the *Atharvaveda* in the so-called *Vratya* book the *Vratya* is brought into special relation with the *pumschali* and *magadhi* faith, is called his harlot, the *mitra* (friend) his Magadha; and similarly, the dawn, the earth (?), the lighting, his harlots, *hasa* (scorn), the thunder, his Magadham. "A more connected account of the *Vratyas* is found in the *Panchavimsa Brahmana* of the Samaveda and the Sutras of that Veda. It is clear that, as their name suggests, they were persons regarded as outcasts; and ceremonies are described intended to secure them admission into the Brahmanical fold. The description of the *Vratyas* well suits nomad tribes: they are declared not to practise agriculture, to go about in rough wagons, to wear turbans, to carry goads and a peculiar kind of bow, while their garments are of a special kind. Their sense of justice was not that of the Brahmanas, and their speech, though it seems Aryan, was apparently *prakritic* in form, as is suggested by the significant remark that they called what was easy of utterance but hard to speak?" Owing to the obscurity of the *Vratya* book, the meaning of these passages, as I have already stated, is not altogether clear. But it is evident that book of the *Atharvaveda* dealing with the *Vratyas*—the inexplicable book—glorifies the *Vratya*, as a type of the supreme power in the universe. That Magadha was recognised as the chief centre of *Vratya* culture is evident from the fact that in the *Srauta Sutras* of *Latyayana* and *Katyayana*, it is enjoined that after the *Vratyastoma*, a rite that procured the admission of the *Vratya* to the Brahmanic fold, his belonging or outfit had to be bestowed either upon an inferior Brahmana, one in name only, of Magadha, or one who had given up the *Vratya* practices. This evidently proves that the Aryan Brahmanas who had advanced farther and had settled in Magadha were looked down upon, should we say as *Vratyas* or as priests of the Magadhas, and consequently the mass of the population of Magadha was also looked down upon. It seems the people and their priests were alike treated with disfavour.

But why was Magadha looked down upon? Why were her people held on contempt? What was her fault and what was their fault? How and why did the Vedic Aryans condemn this land and her people? Fick

has suggested that the low opinion formed of Magadha and of *Magadhesiya Brahmana* might have been due to the low estimate in which the Western Brahmanas held Magadha, which was at a great distance from them and which was not Brahmanized; partly also, that the people of Magadha, their priests or Brhamanas, at any rate, may have acquired this bad reputation. The learned authors of the *Vedic Index* support Oldenberg and lay it down to the fact that the Magadhas were not really Brahmanized. "This", they say, "is entirely in accord with the evidence of the *Satapatha Brahmana* that neither Kosala, nor Videha, was fully Brahmanized, at an early date, much less, Magadha." Referring to Weber's suggestion which might have influenced the question, viz., the persistence of aboriginal blood and the growth of Buddhism, it may be rightly pointed out that the latter consideration was hardly applicable to the *Yajurveda* or the *Atharvaveda*. Oldenberg also thought that Magadha alongwith some other countries, such as Anga, Kasi, Kosala and Videha, were the abodes of earlier Aryan immigrants, i.e., they were pioneers in advance of the general body of the Aryans, and as such, were looked down upon by their brethren. As Aryans, who were the first to migrate, their actions were not favourably considered, rather these were condemned.

Magadha was indeed on the extreme confines of Aryan civilisation and culture, where Indo-Aryan influence had not penetrated fully, and dwelling in the Magadha country was considered as something unusual—at any rate, was not approved of. Magadha in the early Vedic times was only a settlement of the Aryans, the main horde was still lagging behind, and certainly had not advanced so far. And, even at a later time, when the Kuru-Panchala civilisation had established itself, we hear of Magadha being spoken of as a settlement. The significance of a passage in the *Mahabharata* in this connexion cannot be over-estimated: "O son of Pritha, thus shines the great beautiful Magadha settlement possessed of cattle, ever full of water, free from diseases and rich in good houses." Magadha, indeed, was a settlement of the Aryans; it does not matter in which ethnogical wave the Aryans reached this province, but those who came and with them, the land, its inhabitants and settlers all were condemned.

This is not the first time that such a thing had happened in the history of Aryan India. The example of *Panis*, who have been characterised as the demons of darkness for their greediness and hoarded wealth, but who were also Aryans having made themselves

prominent by their trading and mercantile habits, and who also were condemned, may be cited. In the case of the Aryans advancing leaving their brethren behind, and settling in Magadha, we find a repetition of the same old story.

The people, who had come in advance and had settled in Magadha, were not Non-Aryans, but were pure Aryans whose liberal views, or Forwardness in advancing beyond the country of their brethren, brought on them the hatred of those whom they had left behind in the west. The growth of a new spirit was inevitable amongst some of the Aryans immediately after their settlement in the Punjab, and even afterwards. Some of them had like the *Panis* advanced for purposes of trade, or, as Mahavira or Buddha did afterwards, some of them left their hearths and homes actuated by the spirit of teachers. These had to leave their homes in the west to drift into the homeless state so common in the east. The *Vratya* is described as going to the people, becoming the guest of the king as well as of the ordinary people, to be honoured with a becoming reverence everywhere by his host, in his sojourning to all the points of the compass. He had to preach his message and explain it. Herein was the origin of the *Vratyas*. Herein was the cause of the spread of Aryan culture among other communities living on the borderland of Aryan culture and civilisation. The *Vratya* was an Aryan, but the fact that he had left his hearth and home, made his brethren and relations assume a contemptuous attitude towards the country of his adoption. And when we read in the *Panchavimsa Brahmana* that the converted *Vratyas* in order to cut off all connection with their past, had to hand over their wealth to their companions who still preferred to live according to the old mode of life, we have no other conclusion left than to say that their brethren in the west were at once satisfied as they—shall we call them the *Liberals*—handed over their gains which they had acquired by their “go-aheadness”. Everything was forgotten after the performance of some ceremonies, re-admitting the lost ones into their own fold—the old Brahmanic fold. As it says, when the Devas ascended *Svarga*, some of their brethren wandered on earth as *Vratyas*. These latter, being afterwards desirous of joining their fortunate brethren came to the spot whence they had ascended *Svarga*, but owing to their ignorance of (Vedic) hymns, they could not accomplish their object. The Devas sympathising with their less fortunate brethren, asked the *Maruts* to teach them the necessary hymns. The *Vratya* Devas, having thus learnt the hymn called *Sodasa*,

written in the metre called *Anustubh*, ascended subsequently to *Svarga*. This *Svarga* was the old Brahmanic fold. What did it mean really? It significantly shows that the *Vratyas* were taken back. They were Aryans, they had no fault but what we would call now their "go-aheadness". The Aryan society was even then exclusive, and no one but the Aryans could have been re-allowed into it. But such was the way in which the forwardness of those who advanced was estimated that long afterwards, they, as well as the land where they lived, bordering on the verge of Aryan civilisation, were held in bad repute, in spite of the great spiritual and intellectual lead of Magadha and of her people in subsequent times.

The legend in the *Satapatha Brahmana* relating to the national hero, Videgha Mathava, has preserved well the memory of Brahmanism as it spread from the west towards the east. The story is not only interesting but useful, as it speaks of Vedic culture, from the west, the banks of the *Sarasvati*, till the Brahmanas reached the river *Sadanira* which they did not cross.

And the reason ascribed was that *Agni Vaisvanara*, who from the *Sarasvati*, did not cross the river, and, therefore, in earlier ages no Brahmana went across the *Sadanira* to the east, for it was bad land, which *Agni Vaisvanara* had not tasted. Now, however, eastward of the region dwell many Brahmanas; now is it indeed good land, for now have Brahmanas made it worthy of habitation through offerings. As Oldenberg has significantly observed, "The difference between the ancient Vedic land of culture in the west and in the east, where there was Aryan land, but not yet for a long-time a home of *Vaisvanara* can scarcely be significantly expressed."

Thus was Mithila first Aryanised, and thence came forward Vedic culture to Magadha and went still further east, till the whole land fell under the influence of Aryan culture and civilisation. Mithila was thus Aryanised earlier than Magadha, and that is the reason, as stated by me before, why even now the Brahmanas of Mithila are averse to bathe along the right banks of the Ganges on sacrificial occasions, a reminiscence of the old story and usage.

In the list of the sixteen celebrated monarchs given in the *Mahabharata*, one of the *Sodasarajikas* was Brhadratha Vira, whom Pargiter has rightly considered as probably Brhadratha of Magadha, and whose name we have already mentioned. We know also from the

Buddhist *Anguitara Nikaya* that there were sixteen states of considerable extent and power known as *Solasa Mahayanapada* of which Magadha was one. What the territory actually was, is very difficult to ascertain, though as mentioned before, in the time of the Buddha, it corresponded very likely, with the modern districts of Patna and Gaya. From the Puranas of which the historical interest centres in Magadha, though composed much later, we get lists of the kings of Magadha, which long before the writing of the Puranas, had become the recognized centre of culture, both religious and political. The long line of kings attributed to Magadha by the Puranas consists of a series of no fewer than eight dynastic lists, furnished with a statement of the number of years in each reign and the duration of the dynasty. If all these dynasties could be regarded as successive, and if the length of reigns could be determined with certainty the chronology of Magadha would be a simple matter of calculation. But this is not the case; neither is it possible to deal with all the kings in the course of one lecture.

From these Puranic lists, we find the name of the Sisunaga dynasty called by the Puranas as Ksatriyas, to which some historical reality can be given and of which Sisunaga was the founder. Of course, the first important king was Bimbisara of Srenika with whom began the greatness and supremacy of Magadha by his conquest of the kingdom of Anga. Bimbisara strengthened his position by his marriages with two princesses, one of the family of the Lichchavis of Vaisali, other of the royal house of Kosala. The former bore him Ajatasatru to whom he is said to have surrendered the throne after reigning twenty-eight years. After the murder of Bimbisara by his son Ajatasatru or Kunika the parricide ascended the throne in 554 B.C., an event which may have happened after the death of Mahavira, and a few years before the Nirvana of the Buddha. Both Mahavira and the Buddha preached in Magadha during the reign of Bimbisara. Ajatasatru annexed the country to the north of the Ganges, now known as Tirhut, which the Lichchavis then occupied. It has been supposed that the invader carried his victorious arms to their natural limit, *i.e.*, the foot of the Himalayas; and that from this the whole region between the Ganges and the Himalayas became subject more or less directly to the suzerainty of Magadha. At any rate, this was the beginning of the greatness of Magadha, but as this subject is of more than a passing interest, and is rather of a momentous nature in the history of Magadha. I hope you will permit me to dwell at length on this topic.

Ajatasatru was not on friendly terms with the Lichchavis with whom he was connected on the maternal side. He must have felt that the Lichchavis formed the greatest bar to the realisation of his ideas of an empire, and he vowed. "I will root out these Vajjians, mightily and powerful though they be; I will destroy these Vajjians; I will bring upon these Vajjians utter ruin." He was also under the impression that his foster-brother, Abhaya, who had also Lichchavis blood in him and who liked them very much might be supported by them in which case his throne might be threatened.

This is how the *Sumangala-vilasini* speaks of the incident. There was a port near the Ganges extending over a *yojana*, half of which belonged to Ajatasatru and the other half of the Lichchavis and their orders were obeyed within their respective boundaries. There was a mountain not far from it, and at the foot of the mountain, there was a mine of precious substances. Ajatasatru was late in going there, and the avaricious Lichchavis took away all the precious substances. When Ajatasatru came and learnt that all the precious substances had been taken away by the Lichchavis, he grew angry and left the place. This happened also in the succeeding year. Having sustained a heavy loss, he thought that there must be a fight between him and the Lichchavis. He realised, however, that the Lichchavis being numerically stronger, he would fail to carry out his purpose. So he conceived the design of destroying the independence of the Lichchavis by sowing among them the seeds of dissension. Formerly, the Lichchavis were not luxurious, but were very strenuous and energetic, and so Ajatasatru could not get an opportunity of subduing them. He sent Vassakara, one of his ministers, to the Buddha, who predicted that in future the Lichchavis would be delicate, having soft hands and feet, would use very luxurious and soft beds with soft pillows made of cotton, and would sleep till sunrise. He further declared, "By no other means will the Vajjians be overcome but by propitiating them with tributes or dissolving the subsisting union." Vassakara returned from the Buddha and repeated his declaration to the king, Ajatasatru. He, of course, did not like to propitiate the Vajjians with tributes, as that would diminish the number of his elephants and horses. So he decided to break their union, and Vassakara advised him to convene a meeting of his councillors to bring up some discussions regarding the Vajjians, when in the midst of the sitting, he (Vassakara) would quit the council after offering a remonstrance saying, "Maharaja, what do you want with them? Let

them occupy themselves with the agriculture and commercial affairs of their own (realms)." Then he said to Ajatasatru, "Maharaja, completely cut of all my hair, bringing charge against me for interdicting your discussion without either binding or flogging me. As I am the person by whom the ramparts and ditches of your capital were made and as I know the strong and the weak, high and low parts (of your fortifications), I will tell the Vajjians that I am able to remove any obstacle you can raise."

The Raja acted up to the advice of his minister, Vassakara. The Vajjians heard of the departure of Vassakara, and some of them decided not to allow him to cross the river, while others observed : "He (Ajatasatru) has so treated him because he advocated our cause." Such being the case, they said (to the guards who went to stop him), "Fellows, let him come." Accordingly, the guards permitted him to go in.

Now Vassakara, being questioned by the Vajjians, told them why he was so severely punished for so slight an offence, and that he was there a Judicial Prime Minister. Then the Vajjians offered him the same post which he accepted, and very soon he acquired reputation for his able administration of justice; and the youths of the Vajji rulers went to him to have their training at his hands.

Vassakara on a certain day, taking aside one of the Lichchavi rulers mysteriously asked him : "Do people plough a field ?" "Yes they do; by coupling a pair of bullocks together." On another occasion, taking another Lichchavi aside, he significantly asked : "With what curry did you eat (your rice)?" and said no more. But hearing the answer, he communicated it to another person. Then upon a subsequent occasion, taking another Lichchavi aside he asked him in a whisper, "Art thou a mere beggar?" He enquired, "Who said so?" and Vassakara replied, "That Lichchavi." Again, upon another occasion, taking another side, he enquired, "Art thou a cowherd?" and on being asked who said so, mentioned the name of some other Lichchavi. Thus, by speaking something to one person, which had not been said by another person, he succeeded in bringing about a disunion among the rulers in course of three years so completely that none of them would tread the same path together. When matters stood thus, he caused the tocsin to be sounded as usual. Some of the Lichchavi rulers disregarded the call saying, "Let the rich and the valiant assemble. We are beggars and



cowherds." The Brahmin sent a mission to the Raja saying, "This is the proper time. Let him come quickly." The Raja on hearing the announcement assembled his forces by beat of drum and started. The Vajjians, on receiving intimation thereof, sounded the tocsin declaring, "Let us not allow the Raja to cross the river." On hearing this also, they refused to meet together saying, "Let the valiant rulers go." Again the tocsin was sounded and it was thus declared, "Let us defend ourselves with closed gates." No one responded to the call. Ajatasatru entered by the wide open gates and went back, after inflicting on the people great calamities. Thus, Magadha became master of the Lichchavis and Ajatasatru erected a fortress on the northern bank of the Son near its confluence with the Ganges, to watch his Lichchavi opponents. Here was the beginning of the greatness of Pataliputra.

Mahapadma Nanda, the son of the last Saisunaga king, Mahanandin, and a Sudra woman, established the next dynasty in or about 413 B.C. Not only according to the *Puranas* but also according to two Greek accounts, he was the son of a woman of a very low status who was probably one of the domestic attendants of the palace. One of the Greek accounts is by Diodorous Siculus who says : "Alexander had learned from Phegeus that beyond the Indus was a vast desert of twelve days' journey, and at the furthest borders thereof, ran the Ganges. Beyond this river dwell the Tabenians and the Ganga idea whose king's name was Chandramas, who had an army of 20,000 horse, 2,00,000 foot, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants. The king could not believe this to be true and sent for Poros and enquired of him whether it was so or not. He told him all was certainly true, but that the present king of the Gangaridae was but of mean and obscure extraction, accounted to be a barber's son; for his father being a very handsome man, the queen fell in love with him and murdered her husband and so the kingdom devolved upon the present king."

The other accounts given by Quintus Curtius who notes : "Poros added, however, that the king was not only of low, but the extremely base origin, for his father was a barber whose personal merits recommended him to the queen. Being introduced by her to the king then reigning, he contrived to bring about his death, and under pretence of acting as guardian to his sons got them into his power and put them to death. After their extermination, he begot the son who was now king, and who more worthy of his father's condition than his own, was odious and contemptible to his subjects."

### The University of Nalanda

The site of this widely known University of ancient India, which fulfilled the dictum of Carlyle that a true University is a collection of books, as well as that of Newman that it is a school of universal learning, implying the assemblage of strangers from all parts in one spot, the *alma mater* of a host of distinguished logicians, grammarians and philosophers, "the rendezvous of religious controversialists, the never-failing fountain-head from which Tibet and China imbibed a good deal of their learning and civilization," is indicated by the melancholy tanks and a long line of lofty mounds extending north and south for some 3,000 feet at Bargaon, at present a desolate, dust-covered hamlet, about eight miles from Rajgir. The place can be reached by the Bihar-Bakhtiarpur Light Railway Station Nalanda, from which the ruins of the famous monastery can be seen and from which it is only a mile off. Scholars all over the world and we, the people of Bihar, are particularly grateful to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland for having made possible the excavation of this ancient and interesting site, and we have no doubt that further traces of the big and impressive buildings described by the Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsiang, will be discovered through the activities of the Archaeological Department. General Cunningham, the father of Indian Archaeology, who first truly identified the site, was quite correct when he observed that it possessed finer and more numerous specimens of sculpture than any other places he had visited. And considering the very large number of places which he had visited, many of which he had himself excavated, this may be considered as a high testimony.

Apart from the sculptures, some of which are even now available, we may also refer to the fine description of Hiuen Tsiang who says, "The richly adorned towers and the fairy-like turrets, like pointed hill-tops are congregated together. The observatories seem to be lost in the vapours (of the morning), and the upper rooms tower above the clouds. From the windows one may see how the winds and the clouds (produce new forms), and above the soaring eaves the conjunctions of the sun and the moon (may be observed). How the deep, translucent ponds bear on their surface the blue lotus, intermingled with the *Kanaka* flower of deep red colour; and at intervals the *Amra* groves spread their shade over all. All the outside courts, in which are the priests' chambers, are of four stages. The stages have dragon-projections and coloured eaves; the pearl-red pillars, carved and ornamented, richly adorned

balustrades and roofs covered with tiles that reflect light in a thousand shades—these things add to the beauty of the scene.” Besides the tanks, all that now remains of its splendid buildings, its spacious hall and dreaming spires, its long-extending corridors and splendid libraries, its incense-streaming temples and adjoining grounds is a heap of mounds which is now yielding a bumper harvest to the archaeologists. In the words of one who has done so much to bring to the notice of the world and glorious sculptures and art of Magadha, but who has also done so much to injure it, “when the caves and temples of Rajgir were abandoned to ravages of decay and when the followers of Tathagata forsook the mountain dwellings of their great teacher, the monastery of Nalanda arose in all its splendour on the banks of the lakes of Bargaon; successive monarchs vied in its establishment; lofty pagodas were raised in all directions, halls of disputation and schools of instruction were built between them; shrines, temples and topes were constructed on the side of every tank and encircled the bases of every tower and around the whole mass of religious edifices were grouped the “four-storied dwellings of the preachers and teachers of Buddhism.” And recent excavations have shown how the buildings were made of bricks of a superior quality and admirable texture—“fitted together so perfectly that in some places the joints between the bricks are altogether inconspicuous.” As the late Dr. Spooner observed, “As brickwork the construction is remarkable, far superior to any modern work that I have seen in recent years.” This testimony of an archaeologist of the position and experience of Dr. Spooner is worth full consideration.

The year 450 is the earliest limit to which roughly can be assigned that royal recognition of Nalanda, though its early tradition betrays more or less a mythical character. Taranath would trace it to Asoka. He observes : “Here in Nalanda was a former times, the birthplace of the venerable Sariputta and it is also the place where, he with 80,000 *arhats*, attained Nirvana. In course of time, only the *Chaitya* of the venerable Sariputta remained, at which King Asoka gave great offerings to the gods and to which he erected a great Buddhist temple....In this way the first founder of the Nalanda Vihar was Asoka.” But judging from the fact that there is no mention of it by Fa-hein, it would be very hard to accept this version of the Tibetan historian regarding the foundation of the University, though presumably, the importance of the place reaches back to remote ages.

According to Hiuen Tsiang, “not long after the Nirvana of the

Buddha, a former king of this country, named Sakraditya, built this Samgharama. His son Buddhaguptaraja not only continued but added to it, while his son Tathagataguptaraja followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. His successor Baladityaraja added to the establishment, and his son Vajra also continued the pious object. Then a king of Central India emulated the example of these pious kings, by not only adding a new Samgharama, but by building round these edifices a high wall with one gate, which afterwards figured so prominently, being protected by the *Dvara Pandita*. Then followed a long succession of kings who continued the work of building, using all the skill of the sculptor till the whole became a truly marvellous sight."

Not only was it truly marvellous to the beholder, but its prosperity continued and I-Tsing who studied here for ten long years found it in a prosperous condition. Its name and fame flourished for long and in 750 the Tibetan king sent emissaries of Nalanda to invite its High Priest Kamalasila to confute heresies in his dominion and to bring about a renaissance of Buddhism. After this, its decadence commenced, very likely owing to the rise of the rival royal University of Vikramasila, which became the premier educational establishment in Northern India. But as we read in the accounts relating to Vikramasila, there was for sometime an intercourse between the two Universities. We have it also on record that the Tibetan monk who was sent by the king of Tibet to take Atisa there from Vikramasila stayed on his way at Nalanda. And though Hiuen Tsiang mentioned a legend, that Nalanda was to be the model for a period of a thousand years, we may say that it did not retain its glory for so long a period.

According to Dr. Keilhorn, Buddhism was flourishing at Nalanda, as judged from the Ghosrawan inscription, which Major Kittoe, its discoverer, thought to have been inscribed between the middle of the ninth and tenth centuries. This inscription which I will refer to later on, was inscribed in the reign of Devapala, and refers to the installation of a priest named Viradeva as the superior priest at Nalanda. Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri is of opinion that, even during the tenth and eleventh centuries, Nalanda was powerful rival of Vikramasila, and Nalanda not only flourished but maintained its high position. He supports this by mentioning that a manuscript copied at Nalanda in the sixth year of Mahipala's reign is to be found in the Library of the Asiatic Society. We shall presently speak of the various

references to Nalanda, but we do not think we would be justified in coming to the conclusion that, even with the addition of some more references added to the one made by the learned scholar, Nalanda was in a very flourishing condition so late. Two causes must have contributed to its decay—its buildings must have become old and dilapidated owing to the lapse of ages and, secondly, it must have been cast into the shade by the growing splendours of the rival University of Vikramasila to which the attention of the kings was directed and which necessarily led to the withdrawal of royal patronage. The result was that the most remarkable *Samgharama* languished. It did continue to exist however, even after the invasion of the Muhammedans, by whom it was destroyed alongwith the other Universities—for the *Pag-sam-jon-Zang* says that after the Muhammedan invasion the temples and *chaityas* were repaired by a sage named Mudita Bhadra. Soon after this, one Kukkutasidha, a minister of some king of Magadha, erected a temple at Nalanda, and while a religious sermon was being delivered there, two very indigent Tirthika mendicants appeared on the scene. Some wicked young novice-monks threw dirty water on them in disdain. This made the mendicants very angry. After propitiating the sun for twelve years, they performed a fire-sacrifice and threw living embers and ashes from the sacrificial pit into the Buddhist temples. This destroyed completely not only the fine library, but the buildings too. That the buildings were destroyed by fire is evidenced by the Baladitya inscription, which also we shall refer to later on.

Whatever may be the exact date of the establishment of the University of Nalanda, the place was an important one even in the days of the Buddha. He stayed for some-time at Nalanda where he went with a great company of the brethren and stopped at the Pavarika Mangrove. He was met here by the venerable Sariputta and solved that disciple's difficulties. Here also he had that comprehensive religious talk with the *Samgha* on the nature of upright conduct, of earnest contemplation and of intelligence. One of Nalanda's villagers named Lepa has been described as prosperous, famous, rich in high and large houses, beds, seats, vehicles, and chariots, abounding in riches, gold and silver, possessed of useful and necessary things, owning many male and female slaves, cows, buffaloes, and sheep. Buddha spent sometime in one of the bathing halls of this rich Lepa, where Udaka came, heard a long discourse from him and was converted. From Nalanda the Great One went to Pataliputra which was evidently inferior to the former in

the eyes of Anada who did not consider Pataliputra to be a fit place for the Buddha's Nirvana, while Nalanda was considered fit. That would evidently show that so far as importance went, Nalanda was superior to Pataliputra and it may be, therefore, taken for granted that Nalanda was also older than Pataliputra. The *Kalpasutra* mentions that the other great religious leader and teacher, Mahavira, also spent sometime here. In the *Sutrakritanga*, Nalanda is described as containing many hundreds of buildings, though it was then only a suburb of Rajagriha.

In the *Dighha Nikaya* we find mentioned the name of the village Nalanda, near Rajagriha, with a Pavarika Mango Park, and Amra seems to have been the name of the original owner of the site of Nalanda establishment. Here we find that a young householder tried to induce the Tathagata to exhibit miraculous powers saying, "This Nalanda of ours, Sir, is influential and prosperous, full of folk, crowded with people, devoted to the Blessed One. It were well. If the Exalted One were to give command to some brother to perform by powers surpassing those of an ordinary man a mystic miracle." Needless to say, the great Tathagata spoke against the use of miraculous powers. There is also mentioned a Rest House called *Amravatika* where Buddha spent a night.

Coming to the Chinese travellers, Fa-hien does not mention Nalanda. He mentions the name of a village called Nalo which some archaeologists have tried to identify as Nalanda, but this identification has not been and cannot be accepted. We are sure that if Nalanda was at the time of the visit of Fa-hien worth visiting, he would not have left it undescribed. That evidently shows that the *Samgharama* did not exist then, or, at any rate had not acquired any celebrity whatever to attract the foreign seeker after truth. It is Hiuen Tsiang who has given us a full description of the Nalanda establishment and University, "where student from all over India came together from the distance of 10,000 km and where "priests or strangers always reach to the number of 10,000," and of its monasteries and their builders, the teachers and the taught. "The priests to the number of several thousands, are men of the highest ability and talent." That prince of travellers continues : "Their distinction is very great at the present time, and there are many hundred whose fame had rapidly spread through distant regions. Their conduct is pure and unblamable. They follow in sincerity the precepts of the moral law. The rules of this convent are severe and all the priests

are bound to observe them. The countries of India respect them and follow them. The day is not sufficient for asking and answering questions." Such was the value of the hall-mark of the University that we find that person wanted to "usurp" the name of the Nalanda students, in order to receive honour in consequence. So high was the standard, that those desirous of entering the University and taking part in the discussion, had first to engage in disputation with the *Dvara Pandita* (the keeper at the gate), who proposed such hard questions that "those who fail compared with those who succeed are as seven or eight to ten." And even the two or three who succeeded in defeating the gatekeeper were invariably humbled in the assembly. Evidently that showed the high standard of the *alumni* of the Nalanda University which concerned itself with what we would call higher teaching, the examination at the gate being the Matriculation of the scholars to enable them to enter the portals of the University.

The fine description of Hiuen Tsiang has been supplemented by I-Tsing who has given us the fullest details in his *Buddhist Practices in India*, of the curriculum of studies and the method of the observances of religious rites at Nalanda. This scholar started from China in 671, and arrived at Tamralipti, the modern Tamluk, in Bengal, in 673: He studied at Nalanda for a considerable time and collected some four hundred Sanskrit Texts, amounting to 5,00,000 slokas. During his time, there were eight halls and three hundred apartments.

Nalanda is also mentioned in connection with the names of a number of Chinese travellers, who came to India with the object of studying at the famous University.

Two Tibetan traditions mention Nalanda, one before the days of Nagarjuna, of whom we shall speak later on, and the other also in connection with the great scholar when one of his contemporaries, a Brahmana, named Subisnu established one hundred and eight temples at Nalanda.

We may here refer to various epigraphic and other references in connection with Nalanda.

(i) In the beginning of the eighth century A.D., two eminent teachers from Magadha visited Tibet at the invitation of King Thisongden-tsan and formally introduced the religion of the Buddha there. Santa Raksita, who was at that time the High Priest of the monastery

of Nalanda, was invited by the Tibetan king. He was received by the Tibetans with all the honours due to his high position as the spiritual teacher of the king of Magadha and was given the title of Acharya Bodhisattva. He was appointed High Priest of Tibet, and under his direction was introduced, for the first time, the system of Buddhist monachism now known as Lamaism in Tibet. At this time a Chinese missionary named Hosang Mahayana visited Tibet and as Hosang was superior to Santa, the king sent for the Buddhist philosopher Kamala Sila of Magadha, who visited Tibet, defeated Hosang in the presence of the assembled court and was placed at the head of the metaphysical branch of the Buddhist church in Tibet.

(ii) In the reign of Devapala, of the Pala dynasty, Nalanda was visited by Viradeva, an inhabitant of Nagarhara, and Devapala made him the high priest.

(iii) Pandita Hirananda Sastri, who was for sometime in charge of the Nalanda excavations, discovered a record inscribed on both sides, of a large copper plate surmounted by a seal soldered to its top, bearing an emblem, the *Dharmachakra*, flanked by two gazelles, the insignia of Nalanda. It had suffered in the fire which had destroyed the building. The seal bears the legend "Sri-Devapala Devasya", i.e., of Devapaladeva, who, as already noted, was the third sovereign of the Pala dynasty. This record tells us of the grant of certain villages in the Rajagriha and Gaya districts of the Srinagara, identified with Pataliputra division, for the unkeep of the monastery at Nalanda, and for the comfort of Bhiksus coming there from the four quarters, for medical aid, for the writing of *Dharma Ratnas*, or religious books, and for similar purposes.

(iv) In the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (X.37), Professor S.N. Majumdar Sastri gives us interesting facts regarding the Hisla statue inscription of the thirty-fifth year of Devapala which recorded the installation by Gangadhara. The importance of this lies in the fact that this record extends the reign of Devapala by two years and Mr. Sastri concludes that it is the *earliest* Buddhist statue of the Pala period for the "latest recorded regnal year for Devapala was 33 as supplied by his Monghyr Grant." Further, it is the earliest Buddhist statute—Tara of the Pala period, which, not only mentions Nalanda and its famous Buddhist convent, but it also mentions a learned scholar Manjusrideva, whose date is thus made clear.



(v) In 1862, Cunningham brought to the notice of the public, the existence of an inscription at the foot of a sculpture, Vagisvari, at Nalanda. As it is inscribed on the idol Vagisvari, it is known as Vagisvari inscription. It was discovered by Buchanan Hamilton and it figures in Martin's *Eastern India*. The inscription records the name of *Paramabhattacharaka Maharajadhiraja Sri Gopala* at Nalanda.

(vi) In the fifth regnal year of Mahipala was copied at Nalanda *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita* which is now preserved in the library at Cambridge.

(vii) In the sixth regnal year of the same sovereign an *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita* was copied by Kalyānamitra Chintamani at Nalanda, at the expense of *Sthavira* Sadhugupta of Taribari Mahavihara. This fine manuscript was discovered by Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri in Nepal and is now preserved in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Mahipala has been described as *Paramabhattacharaka Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramasaugata*.

(viii) In 1864 was discovered, among the ruins at Nalanda by Captain Marshall, an inscription, since known as the Baladitya inscription, preserved now in the Calcutta Museum. In it we find a reference to the rebuilding of a temple after its destruction by fire.

(ix) In the reign of Nayapala, who died in 1045, Dvipankara Sriijnana was at the head of the University and he went to Tibet at the request of the king of Tibet.

(x) In the fourth regnal year of Rampala, one Grahnakundu copied an *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita*. The writer, as it appears from the fly-leaf, was then at Nalanda, and Rampala is described as *Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramasaugata*.

(xi) In 1165 was copied an *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita* at Nalanda, which is now in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. From the *puspika* (colophon) we find that Nalanda's king was then *Paramesvara Paramabhattacharaka Paramasaugata Maharajadhiraja* Srimad Govindapala. The copy was made, as we learn from the same colophon, in Govindapala's fourth regnal year.

(xii) The Royal Asiatic Society's excavations at Nalanda have also brought out a coin of Govinda Chandra.

(xiii) I may be permitted to mention also the discovery of seals, "Sri Nalanda-Mahavihariya Arya-Bhiksu-Samghasya" or the Venerable Community of Monks in the great Bihar of Sri Nalanda.

(xiv) And lastly, as undated inscription has been discovered at Benares, which Dr. Vogel thinks to be of the eighth or ninth century, in which there is a reference to a pious gift at the glorious Nalanda by Dandika, an inhabitant of Aranyagiri belonging to the district of Nalanda.

Hiuen Tsiang, to whom we are so much indebted for the description of Nalanda observes thus about the name of the place : "The old accounts of the country say that to the south of the *Samgharama* in the middle of an *Amra* grove, there is a tank. The Naga of this tank is called Nalanda. But the truth is, that Tathagata in old days practised the life of a Bodhisattva here, became the king of a great country and established his capital in this land. Moved by pity for living things, he delighted in continually relieving them. In remembrance of this virtue, he was called 'charity without intermission'—*Naalam-da*—and the *Samgharama* was so called in perpetuation of his name." According to the other Chinese traveller, I-Tsing, the name Nalanda was derived from the name of Naga Nanda. General Cunningham, to whom we all are so indebted, accepted this and observed that to the south of the monastery there was a Naga or dragon, Nalanda, and the place was named after him. In two inscriptions, which he discovered there, he found the name as Nalanda. No other theory has been suggested about the name.

We have already observed that Fa-hien who came to India in or about 400 A.D., does not mention Nalanda. He speaks of the village of Nalo, which some scholars have identified with Nalanda. But this identification cannot hold good. As we have suggested before, very likely the University did not exist then, or, at any rate, had not attained any significance to draw the attention of the traveller. Early in the seventh century. Hiuen Tsiang came to India halted at Nalanda for the pretty long period of nineteen months to study. According to him, the site of Nalanda was originally a mango garden which was bought by five hundred merchants at a cost of ten *kotis* of gold pieces and given to the Buddha to enable the merchants to obtain the fruit of holiness. There is, however, no reference to this, and scholars have come to the conclusion that it must have been given to a Buddhist saint of a later age and not to the Buddha himself.

Hiuen Tsiang further observes that after the Nirvana of the Buddha five kings named Sakraditya, Buddhagupta, Tathagata, Baladitya and Vajra built five *Samgharamas*. A king of Central India, whose name Hiuen Tsiang does not mention, established another magnificent monastery, and he built round these edifices a high wall with one gate, probably the one mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang himself, where the *Dvara Pandita* sat and tested the fitness of outsiders to join in the disputations. Then we know from the same authority, a fact which we have already referred to, that a succession of kings continued to improve the buildings, using all the skill of the sculptor, till they were marvellous structures.

Baladitya the king of Magadha, who built one of the monasteries at Nalanda was a contemporary of the Hun King, Mihirakula. Mihirakula began his reign in 515, and, therefore, his contemporary Baladitya must have also lived about this time. Baladitya, and three of his predecessors had also built monasteries. If we take 25 years as the average of each reign, Sakraditya can be said to have reigned about 450 A.D. The date of the temple may be, therefore, about 250.

General Cunningham came to the following conclusion. He observes : "The great monastery itself can be readily traced by the square patches of cultivation amongst a long mass of brick ruins 1,600 feet by 400 feet. These open spaces show the position of the courtyards of the six smaller monasteries which are described by *Hiuen Tsiang* as being situated within one enclosure forming altogether eight courts. Five of the monasteries were built by five consecutive princes of the same family and the sixth by their successor called the king of Central India. No dates are given, but from the total silence of Fahien regarding any of the magnificent buildings at Nalanda, which are so minutely described by Hiuen Tsiang, I infer that they must have been built after 410. Surely, if the lofty temple of King Baladitya which was 300 feet in height had then existed, it seems scarcely possible that Fa-hien should not have noticed it. I would, therefore, assign, the probable date of the temple and monasteries of Nalanda to the two centuries between the visits of Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsiang, or from A.D. 425 to 625."

There is another point which may as well be considered in this connection. Hiuen Tsiang records that the great temple of Baladitya was similar to that of the temple at Buddha Gaya. As similarity of style may be taken as denoting proximity of date, the erection of Baladitya's

temple may, with great probability, be assigned to the same century in which the Vajrasana temple was built. The date of the Nalanda temple may, therefore, be between 450 and 550 A.D.

It may be here mentioned that the views expressed by Dr. Cunningham about the date of the building of the temple is based on the theory that it was built at the time when the Bodh Gaya one was built, will naturally fall to the ground, if we are to accept the views that the Vajrasana temple was built during the time of the Kusan dynasty. This theory has been supported by the discovery of a terracotta plaque, by Dr. D.B. Spooner during his excavations at Pataliputra. This plaque bears the illustration of a temple, which Dr. Spooner supposed to be that of the original temple of Bodh Gaya and it also contains some characters in Kharosthi; and considering that the Kharosthi script was introduced into India in the second century A.D., it may be surmised that the temple was built during the Kusan time. That would place the building of the temple very early, but a consideration of other circumstances, specially the fact that Nalanda was not at all mentioned by Fa-hein, leads one to reject this theory and to accept Cunningham's. *But no definite conclusion can be arrived at unless there are thorough excavations of the sites, and until we see the actual plinth of the temple itself, it would be hazardous to come to a definite conclusion.*

We have already referred to the rich endowments made to the University. Indeed, successive kings vied with one another in this respect. When Hiuen Tsiang was there, he found that the king of the country respected and honoured the priests, and the revenue of about one hundred villages went to the endowment of the University. Two hundred householders of these villages, day by day, contributed several hundred piculs of ordinary rice and seven hundred cattles in weight of milk and butter. Hence, the students being so abundantly supplied, did not require to beg for their requisites. Hiuen Tsiang was given every day 120 *jambiras*, 20 *pugas* and a peck of *Mahasali* rice. Every month he was also presented with three measures of oil, a supply of butter and other things according to his needs.

The other traveller, I-Tsing, referring to the endowments to the University, observed that the lands in its possession contained more than two hundred villages, thus showing that, from the time of the visit of Hieun Tsiang to I-Tsing's time, the revenue of another hundred

villages was placed at the disposal of the University, testifying that it was at the highest pinnacle of its glory. These villages, as attested by the scholar, were bestowed upon the monastery by kings of many generations. Evidently, the result was the continuation of the prosperity of the University.

We have already referred twice to the rigid test for admission into the University, and we need not revert to it. Teaching was both tutorial and professional and there was close touch between the professors and the students. As we find in I-Tsing, the old idea of serving the teacher pervaded the establishment, and the spirit of the Hindu times continued in these days also and existed in these Buddhistic establishments, that is to say, the relationship was mutual. After graduation, the students proceeded to the king's court for appointment to the public services. In Hiuen Tsiang's time ten thousand students studied the Greater Vehicle and also the works belonging to the eighteen schools of Buddhism. But that was not all, for that would show that the teaching was only secular. It was not really secular, for even ordinary works such as the Vedas and other books, *Hetuvidya*, *Sabdavidya*, *Chikitsavidya* (the science of healing), the work of *Tantra* (Magic) and the *Samkhya* were studied. In addition to all these, we find that the students investigated "miscellaneous works", whatever, that phrase may mean. The result was that there was one thousand men who could explain the collection of sutras and sastras; five hundred who could explain thirty collection and there were ten men, including the Master of the Law (we can take him to be the Vice Chancellor in our modern parlance), who could explain fifty collections. There were one hundred pulpits, whence the teachers discoursed on their subjects. The prominent teachers then were Dharmapala who was abbot for a long time and Chandrapala, Gunamati and Sthiramati, Prabhamitra and Jinamitra author of the *Mula Sarvastivada Nikaya*, Jnanachandra and Silabhadra, the last being the head of the establishment. He was a prince of Bengal but had renounced the world, and he alone could explain the entire collection of *sutras* and *sastras*. It was under this eminent, virtuous and aged logician and master of the *sastras* that Hiuen Tsiang studied. Needless to say that, in addition to all these, there were many more of rare ability and talent, whose distinction was very great, and there were undoubtedly many hundreds whose fame spread to distant regions, and thereby attracted students to the great University.

Of the scholars mentioned by I-Tsing, viz., Nagarjuna, Deva, Asvaghosa, Vasu Vandhu, Asanga, Dignaga, Kamalasila, Samghabhadra and others, who went to Tibet at the invitation of its king, Nagarjuna stands supreme. We have no authentic record of the life of this scholar, but for all general purposes, the following, though more or less legendary, may be given. A rich Brahmana of Vidarva, to whom no son had been born for many years, once saw in a vision that if he gave alms to one hundred Brahmanas, he would get a son. He did so accordingly, and a son was born, but the astrologers predicted that the child would not live for more than a week. They were, therefore, requested to find a remedy for averting such a calamity and they asserted that his life could be prolonged for seven year only if the parents entertained one hundred Bhiksus. Of course, this was done, and the child lived on until the fatal seventh year began when his parents, unwilling to see the painful end, caused him to be removed to a solitary place in company with a few retainers. As the boy was passing his last mournful days, one day the Mahabodhisattva Avalokitesvara visited him in disguise and advised him to go to the great monastery of Nalanda as the surest means of escaping from the hands of death. The boy, accordingly, repaired thither and informed the head of the monastery of his impending danger. The latter, thereupon, advised him to enter the holy order of monks. This saved him from the clutches of death, and he was ordained a Bhiksu and commenced his studies there. After a few years' service in the monastery, he obtained the subordinate office of steward of the congregation. During the first part of the tenure of that office, Nagarjuna propitiated the goddess Chandika, by whose agency he succeeded in providing the great body of the priests with the necessaries of life. He learnt many other mystic arts and by his religious practices he obtained the perfection of *siddhi*, i.e. success. Even the Nagas used to attend his sermons in the shape of young boys, and they invited him to their abode in the land of the Nagas where he spent three months. He was asked to settle permanently there, but he declined on the ground of his being required to preach the sacred religion in Jambudvipa. He returned to Nalanda with costly presents and also with a religious book called *Naga Sahasrika*. It was for this connection with the Nagas that he obtained the name of Nagarjuna. He afterwards visited many holy places and then returned to his own country where he erected many *chaityas* and composed many works on Science, Medicine, Astronomy and Alchemy. When the high priest of Nalanda died, Nagarjuna succeeded him and matured the

*Madhyamika*. Philosophy, which had been conceived by his illustrious teacher and predecessor. He finally became the head of the whole Buddhistic Church. It is said that Nagarjuna will re-appear in India and live for full one hundred years to teach again the sacred *Dhamma* of the Law of Buddha.

Coming to I-Tsing's time we find that before joining the University, *Vyakarana* or Grammar was the first thing that was taught. The name for general secular literature, as the traveller observes, was the *Vyakarana* on which, at that time, there were five works, viz., the *Siddha* composition for beginners, the *Sutra*, the foundation of all grammatical science, the *Dhatu* consisting of one thousand slokas and treating particularly of grammatical roots, the fourth which was on the three *khilas*, the fifth being the *Vritti-Sutra*. Students learnt the book on the three *khilas* when they were ten years old, and had to study it for three years, which period was required for mastering it thoroughly. After all these, students had to study the *Vritti-Sutra*, this being a commentary on Panini's *sutra*. Finishing them, they learnt composition in prose and verse. Next, attention had to be devoted to *Hetavidya* (Logic) and *Abhidarmakosa* (Metaphysics). In learning the *Nyayadvaratarka-sastra*, students had to draw *anumana* (inferences). Then they studied the *Jataka* (Buddhist birth-stories). That was the preliminary stage of study, after which a student could join the University. Here, as I-Tsing points out, eminent and accomplished men assembled in crowds to discuss possible and impossible questions, and, after having been assured by wise men, of the excellence of their opinions became far-famed for their wisdom. After finishing their education in the University, the scholars proceeded to the king's court to present their schemes and show their talent, seeking for appointments.

While some scholars took to the services, others continued their studies when they had to read Patanjali's book, the *Bhartrihari Sastra*, the *Vakya*—discourse, and the Vedas which they evidently studied to oppose the heretics. It seems there was what we call now the tutorial method of teaching, for I-Tsing observes that he used to converse with his teachers so intimately that he was able to receive invaluable instruction personally from them. And it is also clear that the University provided instruction not only for those who joined the order of monks, but for the laity also. And in concluding this portion of my lecture, I may add that just as we have the system of granting diplomas, in

Nalanda the names of famous scholars were written in white on the lofty gates—a more permanent and conspicuous method of perpetuating the names of the scholars than what we have nowadays.

Nalanda, as we know from Tibetan accounts, had a fine library, situated in the quarter known as the *Dharmaganja* (Piety Mart). It consisted of three grand buildings called *Ratnasagara*, *Ratnadadhi* and *Ratnaranjaka*, all associated with *Ratna* i.e., jewels, these being the three jewels of Buddhism,—Buddha, Dharma and Samgha. *Ratnadadhi* was nine-storied, and in it were kept the sacred scripts, especially the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*. We have already referred to the fact how the Library first fared at the hands of the Muslim invaders. The building was then repaired, but it was finally destroyed by indigent Tirthankaras who felt insulted and aggrieved at the treatment meted out to them, in consequence of which they brought about the destruction of the buildings by fire. Epigraphic evidence confirms the statement about the destruction of the building by fire and its re-building.

Such was Nalanda. In bidding adieu to this subject we cannot but refer to one of its mottos which was :

*Conquer anger by pardon, conquer a bad man by good deeds, conquer a miser by giving him more, and conquer a liar by truth.*

or

*Dhamma and Adhamma both cannot give the same fruits : Adhamma drags one down to hell, while Dhamma leads one to Heaven.*

Let us hope that in our University, also, the same truths will prevail.

### The Royal University of Vikramasila

After having tried to give you some idea about the University of Nalanda, I now propose to deal with the Royal University of Vikramasila. It is associated with the permanent epithet *Royal*, as it was not only created by a king, but it is also on record that the titles on scholars were bestowed by kings. And if the University of Nalanda fulfilled the dictum of Newman that a University is a school of universal learning, implying the assemblage of strangers from various places in one spot. And it also satisfied the dictum of Carlyle of being a collection of books for we know, both from internal and external evidence, that there was a big library, which, alongwith all its other paraphernalia,



was destroyed at the time of the establishment of the Muhammedan power in Bihar.

The accounts, however, relating to Vikramasila are rather meagre. For the details, we have to depend to a large extent on Taranath, the historian of Tibet, whose name we have already mentioned several times. For translation of some passages relating to Vikramasila, I am indebted to Sister Gertrude of the local Convent, and I avail myself of this opportunity to render publicly my best thanks to her for helping me in elucidating the account of Vikramasila.

Our difficulty in tracing a fuller history of Vikramasila is intensified by the fact that Hiuen Tsiang, the prince of Chinese travellers, has not given us any accounts of it proving that the University had not yet invasion helped to bring it down in Bihar. That was the last vestige to Buddhism in these parts, though it lingered for a while in the minds of some sections of the people. The surviving ministers migrated to Orissa, founded colleges in Southern India and stopped the tide of extinction by building *chaityas* and stupas. That question, however, is beyond the scope of our subject.

It is a curious fact that all the three Universities,—Nalanda, Odandapura and Vikramasila,—were situated at some distance from the Capital or capitals of Magadha. What was the reason for it? I venture to think that the best answer to such a question has been given by the great Rabindranath in his *Tapovana*. He writes : "A most wonderful thing that we notice in India is, that here the forest, not the town, is the fountain-head of all its civilisation. Wherever in India its earliest and most wonderful manifestations are noticed, we find that here men have not come into so close contact as to be rolled or pushed into a compact body, or mass, or whole. Here, trees and plants, rivers and lakes, had an ample opportunity to live in close relationship with men. In these forests, though there was human society, there was enough of open space, or aloofness; there was no jostling. Still, this aloofness did not produce an inertness in the Indian mind; on the other hand, it rendered it all the brighter. It is the forest that has nurtured the two great ancient ages of India, the Vedic and the Buddhistic. Not only the Vedic Risis, but Lord Buddha also preached in many woods of India. The Royal Palace had no room for him, it was the forest that took him into its lap. The current of civilisation that flowed from the forest inundated the whole of India."

Such was also the Vikramasila University and all the other ancient Indian Universities. As I have said already that although there was close connection between the Brahmanical and the Buddhist methods of teaching, there was one main difference between the Brahmanic and the Buddhist education, *viz.*, that the latter was not based on Vedic study and its teachers were not invariably Brahmanas. Further, Buddhistic education was open to one and all, and not merely to the three "twice-born" castes. All castes were equally admissible to the Buddhistic community. Defects there were in both the system, but "meaningless and trivial as many of these regulations seem to us, they were no doubt regarded as of great value by those who used them in those far off days. They must have been intended to emphasize the great solemnity of the work in which pupil and teacher were engaged, and to impress upon the pupil the mysterious sacredness which was supposed to characterise the knowledge which was being passed on to him by his teacher." This may sound as a mere ideal to us now.

But we cannot forget that everywhere the same ideal was preached in Ancient India : "Say what is true; do thy duty; do not swerve from the truth; do not swerve from duty; do not neglect greatness; do not neglect what is useful. Whatever is given should be given with faith, not without faith, with joy, with modesty, with fear and with kindness. If there should be any doubt in thy mind with regard to any sacred act or with regard to conduct, conduct thyself as a Brahmana." As one who has been closely associated and, may I add, intimately also, with the students of Magadha for over a decade, I do not think I can hold up before them a better ideal than what was placed by Chanakya before the princes at Pataliputra with whose teaching he was entrusted and to whom he observed: "The King is honoured only in his own kingdom, the learned are honoured throughout the world." The erudite *Acharyas* of Magadha were honoured throughout the then civilised world for their learning,—and who does not even now revere Mahavira and Buddha?—and I can fervently hope that with such glorious ideals before them, our students should not be wanting an example. Let them remember what manner of men their forefathers were, and if they have before them such glorious ideals of which, I hope, I have been able to give them some idea, I will consider myself more than amply rewarded for delivering these lectures on the glories of Magadha, their and our own Motherland.

The Poet has truly observed :

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own my native land!"

Sir Sultan Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of the University, in concluding the course of Lectures observed :

"Gentlemen, as this is the last of a series of very interesting lectures delivered by Professor Samaddar as our University Reader, I would be failing in my duty if I did not convey him our heartfelt thanks for the same.

Professor Samaddar has been in this Province for a number of years and his work as a research scholar and a Professor of History, his keen interest in Archaeology and Economics, his connection with all the healthy public activities of the students here, his work on the Senate and his particular interest in the students who come in close contact with him are wellknown. The Calcutta University paid him, and incidentally to this University, a great compliment when they invited him to give a series of lectures which were ultimately published by them. I have seen these lectures and I can assure you that they fully maintain the high standard of scholarship which is now attributed to his name. Professor Samaddar has given us six most interesting and instructive lectures which when published will, I have no doubt, be a great contribution to the ancient history of Magadha. The masterly manner in which he has dealt with his subject and the scientific study which these crude lectures display are only surpassed by the lucidity of expression and accuracy of facts. On some matters he had differed from wellknown scholars like my friend Mr. Jayaswal and Professor Bhandarkar and he has given his reasons for taking a different view. Whether he is right or whether those from whom he has differed are correct, is a matter on which an expression of opinion will be hazardous, nor indeed do I consider myself fully competent to express my views. The lectures, once published, will be open to discussion and criticism. But whatever, the result of that discussion may be, I have no doubt even those from whom he has differed will acknowledge that Professor Samaddar has been a worthy opponent. I thank him, as the Vice Chancellor of the University, for having accepted the readership without any honorarium; I thank him personally as well as on your

behalf for the extremely learned lectures, as I feel that these have materially contributed to the stock of our knowledge of the ancient history of the province."

## 2

# The Mauryan Age

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### The Monarchy

The court was maintained in splendour and ostentation. The king was attended by a female guard of armed slaves. He got up about 3 a.m. and went to bed about 9 p.m. He interviewed his priests and kitchen-officials, formed his plans and heard reports from officers. He took rest only in the middle of the day for an hour and a half. He received his ambassadors in the forenoon, and reviewed his military forces in the afternoon. There was a particular kind of work posted for each eighth part of the day and of the night. Kautilya gives us details of this daily routine.

Megasthenes speaks of the king's physical exercises, of the massaging of his limbs; and of his delight in the chase and in witnessing gladiatorial contests and combats of animals. He appeared in public in the audience hall and in the law courts. When he left the capital, his person was well guarded. There was a constant fear of plots against his person, and he had to change his bed-chamber every night. Kautilya had detailed the precautions against attempts on the person of the king. There were secret underground passages in the palace leading from one chamber to another. When the king marched out of the city to witness festive shows, fairs, processions or sacrifices, he was protected by a strong force and the police lined the roads and pathways.

It is clear from these accounts that the Mauryan emperor was not a 'do-nothing' monarch, but led an active and strenuous life. Confirmation on this point appears in the inscriptions of Asoka. The Minor Rock Inscription I contains his most important precept : 'Let small and great exert themselves.' In the Kalinga Edict he gives his

ideal of good government : 'the king is to his subjects even as a father; he loves them even as he loves himself; the subjects are to the king even as his children.' Agreeably to this ideal, he tells us that he had made arrangements for the prompt despatch of business at all times and in all places. Whether he was eating his food or resting in his private chambers, whether he was at his physical or religious exercises, at his study or at worship, in parks or pleasure-gardens, his men had been instructed to acquaint him with urgent matters so that he could see to the prompt and personal despatch of state business.

Justin has a statement that the rule of Chandragupta Mauryan was oppressive. But there is nothing to corroborate this statement, in the Indian sources. Kautilya recommends that the king should check his subordinates by division of functions and frequent change of officers. Even in regard to the republican governments of the time, Kautilya's prescription is that they should be overthrown not by force but by diplomacy. Whatever may have been the nature of the administration under Chandragupta, in Asoka's time there was no despotic government but a regular constitution. His Council gave orders to his *Yuktas* both in general financial policy and in details. His principal provincial officers were empowered to grant remissions of revenue and to award punishment. He had officers in charge of the various departments, frontiers and cities. His ministerial Council had power to revise even the imperial orders, as well as to take action in emergent situations. It is clear that the government was a paternal and benevolent monarchy working on constitutional principles.

### The Ministry

There were discussions among political thinkers and publicists as to the strength, the composition and the working of the ministry, and we find some of them referred to in Kautilya's work.

Bharadvaja had held that classmates of the king were to be preferred for the office, Visalaksha that they should be men whose secrets were known to the king, and Parasara that nothing succeeded like success, and men of proved fidelity were the best choice. Pisuna preferred men of proficiency in matters of finance, Kaunapadanta would ensure an all round ability by selecting men whose ancestors had been ministers, Vatavyadhi considered new men as likely to be safer for the king, and Bahudantiputra regarded experience of practical politics as

the highest criterion. It is clear that each thinker had a mind some department of ministerial work, and that his opinion was in accord with the conditions and needs of his time.

As regards the strength of the ministerial Council (*mantriparishad*), the Manavas had suggested 12, the school of Brhaspati 16, and that of Usanas 20. There was apparently the need for widening the ranks, as matters of administration grew more and more complicated with the growth of time. Kautilya therefore advised his king to have as many men as he thought necessary (*yathasamurthyam*), but to have consultation only with three or four members on any subject, so that different points of view might be presented and secrecy maintained at the same time.

In every state there was the need for differentiating the deliberative and consultative ministry (*Mantrins*) from the officers charged with the executive and administrative work (*Amatyas*). Kautilya would, therefore, choose the latter class of ministers in accordance with their experience and their capacity for particular kinds of work. But he would have only men of tested fidelity with whom to take counsel. The test was to be carried out with the help of the institutes of espionage (*samsthah*) and the parties of wandering spies (*samcharah*).

But in issues of far-reaching importance he was to consult not only these three or four but the whole ministerial council (*mantriparishad*), and be guided by the majority in regard to both the end to be achieved and the means to be adopted. The council was to deliberate on all measures of administration. The deliberations were to be strictly confidential and the proceedings maintained without possibility of disclosure. The councillors were to be watched carefully till the matter resolved upon had been taken in hand. With these safeguards, the ministers were to be consulted both individually and in council, and they were to give their opinions with reasons. The ministers who were away from the station were also to be consulted by correspondence.

The passage already cited from Asoka's inscriptions shows how the *mantriparishad* (*parisha*) worked under him. It gave instructions to the *Yuktas*, especially on matters of finance, and had control of accounts. It instructed his *dharma* officers. It recorded and modified,

where necessary, the orders passed by the emperor, and he was content if it informed him of its decisions and disposals. If traditions be believed, the *parishad* supported the Yuvaraja (Samprati, the grandson of Asoka) in setting at naught Asoka's over-liberal grants to Buddhist monasteries, when the emperor was in his dotage. 'Great was the emperor Asoka Mauryan, and very liberal in making gifts, but he had no power to give even a gooseberry fruit (*amalaka*). About the middle of the reign there had been a decentralisation of power, and the *Rajjukas* were authorised to grant such reliefs or remissions and such punishments as were consistent with good government and with the needs of the subjects. The *Rajjukas*, who were provincial officers, were also of ministerial rank (*Mahamatras*).

### The Departments

The departments of the Central Government were 18 in number and their heads were known as *tirthas*. Megasthenes speaks of 'the class of councillors' as nominating the heads of departments—the governors, deputy governors, district officers, treasury officers, generals, admirals and directors of agriculture. But the list of the *tirthas* given by Kautilya does not include any military officers other than the *Senapati*, nor any of the market officers, though Megasthenes clearly states that the chief officers of State were those of the army, the city and the markets. The enumeration of *tirthas* here mentioned is, however, followed in later books with a few variations. We may presume therefore that the central government had got its final cast by this time, and that all other elements, the military, the sacerdotal and the economic, were subordinated to the civil.

The other heads of departments mentioned by Kautilya were military or economic officers. To the former class belong the superintendents of ships, horses, elephants, chariots and infantry; to the latter, those of commerce, weights and measures, tolls, weaving, agriculture, labour, artisans, and merchants.

### Provincial Government

Kautilya notes that the empire was divided into four provinces, and that the provincial capital, or *sthaniya*, was the seat of a viceroy (*uparaja*), who had a miniature court. The provinces in Asoka's reign were Taxila, Tosali, Ujjain and Suvaranagiri. The Kausambi edict is



addressed to the *Mahamatras* these, from which Dr. Hultzsch infers that Kausambi was probably the headquarters of a fifth province. But the term *Mahamatras* does not necessarily denote that they must be officers in a provincial capital, as even *Nagarakas* (city officers) are styled *Mahamatras* in the Kalinga Edict. Asoka's governor at Ujjain was a royal prince (*kumara*), and Asoka was himself viceroy of Ujjain under his father. Taxila (Takshasila) was the seat of Kunala according to Buddhist traditions. Suvarnagiri was the headquarters of the southern viceroy, who was a prince (*aryaputra*) and had jurisdiction over the district of Isila (Chitaldrug) and probably also over Maski (in the Nizam's dominions) and Yerragudi (Kurnool district) where Asoka's inscriptions have recently been found. The eastern capital Tosali was under a *Kumara*, who had jurisdiction likewise over Jaugada in the Samapa country. It is clear that the provinces of the empire were entrusted to royal princes (*kumara* or *aryaputra*).

Asoka's Governor of Girmar was Tushaspa, a *Yavana*. He could have been little more than a district officer. Such districts were known as *ahala* (*ahara*). Each provincial governor was assisted by *Mahamatras* or, as they are called in one place, *Pradesikas*, corresponding apparently to the district officers mentioned by Megasthenes. Thus, we have in the inscriptions specific mention of the *Mahamatras* incharge of Isila, Kausambi, Tosali and Samapa. In two places there are references to a Council (*parishad*) of the *Mahamatras*, which was responsible only to the king and received its orders direct from him. A similar instance is found in the *Divyavadana* tradition which narrates that the *Mahamatras* of Taxila received orders direct from the emperor in regard to the blinding of Kunala.

The connecting links between the provincial government and the localities consisted of the *Rajjukas*, the *Pradesikas*, the *Yuktas* and the *Purushas*. The *Rajjukas* or *Rajjugrahas* appear already in the Jataka literature, and were officers of revenue survey and settlement in the early period. But Asoka invested them with authority of award remissions of revenue as well as to mete out punishments. We are told that they were to instruct the *Yuktas*. Kautilya says that the *Chorarajjukas* had to make good the losses from theft. It would appear therefore that the *Rajjukas* in this period had both revenue and judicial functions. This would agree with the account of Megasthenes that they 'superintended the rivers measured the land, as is done in Egypt, and

inspected the sluices by which water is let out from the main canals into their branches, so that everyone may have an equitable supply of it. The same persons have charge also of the huntsmen, and are entrusted with the power of rewarding or punishing them according to their deserts. They collect the taxes, and superintend the occupations connected with land, as those of woodcutters, carpenters, blacksmiths and miners.' The *Yuktas* were secretaries of some sort who had to codify the royal orders and to go about the country on tour. The *Purushas* were of three ranks, were acquainted with the king's wishes, controlled the *Rajjukas*, and were 'placed in charge of many people.'

There were safeguards against the provincial governor asserting independence or growing too powerful like a Warden of the Marches. In the first place, the emperor's periodical tours (*anusamyana*) and his personal contact with his subjects ensured their loyalty to him and checkmated the designs of an ambitious viceroy. Secondly, there were the *Yuktas* touring about and the *Pradesikas* receiving instructions direct from the central government and carrying them out in the districts and rural tracts. Thirdly, the imperial orders were sometimes addressed to the *Mahamatras* associated with the viceroy direct from the capital and without the knowledge of that officer. Such a situation is implied in the story of the blinding of Viceroy Kunala under a forged order of Asoka, issued by his Queen Tishyarakshita. Fourthly, we have seen that the *Rajjukas* were given power by the emperor, obviously without reference to the provincial government, to reward and punish the people in their charge. These safeguards appear to be no matters of accident, especially when we bear in mind that the viceroys were princes and that a whole section of the *Arthashastra* is devoted to the circumventing of the designs of princes on the throne.

### Local Government

Megasthenes gives us details about the municipal administration of Patna. The Municipal Council consisted of 30 members in six boards of five each, each board being probably a development of the non-official Panchayat system which obtained in India from time immemorial. In their collective capacity the commissioners controlled all matters affecting the general interest, such as the keeping of public buildings in proper repair, the regulation of prices and the care of markets, harbours and temples. The work of the boards is thus described

: 'The members of the first look after everything relating to the industrial arts, carefully protecting the artisans, but enforcing the use of good materials and the performance of a fair day's work for fair wages. Those of the second attend to the entertainment of foreigners. To these they assign lodgings, and they keep watch over their modes of life by means of those persons whom they give them as assistants. They escort them on the way when they leave the country : or in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick and, if they die, bury them. The third body consists of those who inquire when and how births and deaths occur, with the view of levying a tax, and in order that births and deaths among both high and low may not escape the cognizance of the government. The fourth superintends trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures, and see that products in their reason are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax: The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which are sold by public notice. What is new is separated from what is old, and there is a fine for mixing the two together. The sixth and last class consists of those who collect the tenths of the prices of the articles sold. Fraud in the payment of this tax is punished with death.

There were numerous other towns, the government of which may have been on more or less similar lines. 2,000 towns are mentioned in the dominions of Porus and 30 in the Andhra country. The former were probably little more than petty townships. Some of these were district centres for two hundred to four hundred villages. Those at the mouths of the rivers were known as *dronamukha* and those on level plains as *kharvataka*. The great city was *nagara*, and the seaport *pattana*. The provincial capital was *sthaniya* and the imperial capital *Rajadhani*. Some towns were fortified with ditches, ramparts and walls, and had guard-houses for troops (*gulma*). The town was rectangular in plan, and had four wards, each under a special official who enforced absence of traffic in the middle part of the night, except on special nights (*chararatri*). There were precautions against incendiarism, and punishment for it was severe. Music at unseasonable hours was regarded as a nuisance. Kautilya describes towns as under individual magistrates. But it is not true to say that town panchayats are not reflected in the Indian records. One is mentioned in the *Mahabharata*. In the inscriptions of Asoka the city-officers are always mentioned in

the plural, which suggests the panchayat. Town-government as described by Kautilya is, however, that of a Mayor (*Nagaraka*) under whom were the local petty officers (*sthanikas* and *gopa*) who kept registers of persons and property. All public places were watched by spies.

The close connection of the government with the villages will be clear not only from the circuits of officers like the *Pradesika* but from the fact that several of them supplied troops and free labour. Villages were classed under these heads : those that were exempt from taxation (*pariharaka*), those that supplied military contingents (*ayudhiya*), those that gave free labour (*vishti*), those that supplied produce in lieu of taxes, and those that paid taxes, and those that paid taxes in corn or in coin at their option. The towns and villages alike had commonhalls used for social gatherings and public dinners, and for entertainments by dancers, singers and actors. There are complaints that these were distractions from the life of the home and the field.

Villages were autonomous. Each was under its headman (*Gramani*), who consulted the panchayat on questions of customary rights and duties. Every family was responsible for the payment of revenue on its lands, and there are traces of a collective responsibility of the families for payment of revenue. A cluster of five or ten villages was served by a market-town (*samgrahana*) and was in charge of a *Gopa*. It was the special care of the state to encourage settlements in new or abandoned tracts. Megasthenes says that husbandmen were 'regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable; the tillers of the soil, even when battle is raging in their neighbourhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger, for the combatants on either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested. Besides, they neither ravage an enemy's land with fire nor cut down its trees.'

The most interesting feature of rural life in this period is the absence of the modern tendency of the country population to migrate to towns. 'They entirely avoid going into towns.' The importance of a town was estimated by the number of villages with which it was in intimate contact. The number varied from 5 to 400. Sometimes villages suffered from floods or famine, when the people left the locality and migrated elsewhere. But there is no reference to agricultural population, even in those circumstances, flocking to towns.

The industrial regulations in towns are also interesting. There were numerous crafts and guilds (*sreni*), of which the aldermen (*Mukhya*) had official recognition. There were inter-caste clubs (*puga*), and temporary combinations of workmen. Collective obstruction was known and penalised, as also combinations to raise prices. Towns were connected by high roads (*Rajapatha*) or trade-paths (*vanikpatha*), which contained signboards at intervals. The trading corporations of towns were advanced enough to own money and carry on banking operations.

There was something of the nature of a 'Domesday Survey' conducted by the village officer (*Gopa*). He fixed the boundaries, classified lands, looked after roads and rest-houses and registered gifts, sales, charities and remissions of taxes. He kept an account of the number of inhabitants, their professions, their live-stock, and the amounts that were due from each family to the state. 'He shall also keep an account of the number of young and old men that reside in each house, their history (*charitra*), occupation (*ajiva*), income (*aya*) and expenditure (*vyaya*).' Unfortunately, such family-budgets have not survived.

Among the regulations in regard to cities, it is interesting to notice that foreigners and bands of mendicants (*Pashanda*) were carefully watched. They were concentrated in some special quarter or distributed among the villages. A civic survey was made, a *Gopa* being incharge of every ten, twenty or forth households; and family-budgets had to be maintained. Besides regulations safeguarding against incendiarism, we find sanitary laws forbidding the throwing of dirt in the street or in reservoirs of water, or in temples or public buildings. There were special regulations in regard to disposal of dead bodies and to other matters of civic and social hygiene.

## Republics

The contemporaries of Alexander the Great have left records of the republican government they witnessed in India. According to Megasthenes this form of government was widely prevalent. He speaks of localities where people had kings, and others 'where they are self-governed'. Among the 'self-governed' were some peoples governed on aristocratic lines, some military republics, and some true democracies.

There were aristocratic republics on the Beas where 'each of the

5,000 councillors furnishes the state with an elephant.' Among these were the Yaudheyas, 'whose name filled the Greeks with error', and whose council (*gana*) exercised their authority with justice and moderation. Another aristocratic republic was that of the Patalene, whose constitution was Spartan in character, with two hereditary kings chosen from different houses to lead in war, and a Council of Elders whose authority was paramount. The President of the Council was *Moeres*. The people would not submit to Alexander and had emigrated from their territories. We recognise a Spartan character also in the Musicani whose *relam* was 'the most opulent in India', and whose citizens took their meals in common as in Sparta. But they would not recognise slavery, and they regarded 'the excessive pursuit of any art,—the art of war, for instance,—as wickedness'. Near them were the other republics of the Sudras, the Xathroi and the Ossadioi.

Among the military republics are mentioned the Kathaioi, who chose the handsomest man as king, whose women practised *sati*, and whose courage and skill in war were evinced in their defeat of Porus and of the king of the Abhisaras. They dwelt east of the Ravi. In the territory of Saubhuti, too, there was an admirable system of administration, and men were held in esteem for their personal beauty. It both these states weak, ugly or deformed children were exposed, as in Sparta on Mount Taygetus. The Agalassoï had 3,000 horse and 40,000 foot. They resisted the Greeks bravely, and fired their houses when they could no longer defend them, anticipating the Rajput *jauhar*. The Kshudrakas fought the Greeks all alone. They were proud of their liberty, which, for many ages, they had preserved inviolate. Alexander treated them kindly, in contrast to his usual vindictiveness.

The government of the Ambhashthas was likewise republican. They had a Council of Elders and their army of 6,000 horse and 500 chariots was led by three generals. One republic of the Brahamans is mentioned, styled Brachmanoi by the Greeks, and *Brahmanaka nama janapadah* by Patanjali. These philosophers, says Plutarch, encouraged free states to revolt against Alexander, who therefore hanged many of them. Other republics of learning can be traced in the Salankayanas who, according to Patanjali, were in three sections, the *Vamarathas*, the *Kathas* and the *Kapisthalas*, all alike noted for culture and learning.

During Alexander's retreat he met the Malloi, who had formed a league and the Siboi, among whom there was no king. According to

Curtius, it was the prospect of meeting the army of the Malloi—a hundred thousand strong—that struck terror into the hearts of Alexander's men, and led to their insisting on a precipitate retreat.

Kautilya classifies the republics as *Rajasabdopajivin* and *Vartasastropajivin*. Among the former class of political corporations he places the Licchavis, Vrijjikas, Mallakas, Madrakas, Kukurus, Kurus and Panchalas. Among the latter, which were industrial corporations, he includes the guilds of the Kambhojas and the Surasthtras. But, as we have seen, there were republics of other classes also in Western Hindustan.

### Justice

Megasthenes notes that the administration of criminal law was efficient but severe, many offences being punished with death or mutilation. But he adds that the people were honest in trade and had few law suits : "Indians neither put out money at usury nor knowhow to borrow. It is contrary to established usage for an Indian either to do or suffer a wrong, and therefore they neither make contracts nor require securities.' In one place he refers to written contracts, though he states elsewhere that the art of writing was unknown. 'Among the Indians one who is unable to recover a loan or a deposit has no remedy at law. All that the creditor can do is to blame himself for trusting a rogue.'

Crimes were rare. 'An Indian has never been convicted of lying.....Indians are not litigious.' 'They were accustomed to bring charges for merely wounding and murder.' There were few thefts, and little was locked up in the houses. Megasthenes had seen no convictions for theft amounting to 200 drachmas. Punishment was based on the principle of 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' Cropping of the hair was regarded as infamous in the last degree, and was the punishment for heinous offences : such was the importance attached to the conventional observances of caste. Mutilation was punished with mutilation, but that of artisans was punished with death.

The *Arthasastra* has elaborate descriptions of the law courts, of the sources of law of legal procedure, and of the gradation of offences. There were two classes of courts besides the Royal Court, which was the highest court of appeal. The *dharmasthaniya* court tried civil cases, including those of robbery and violence, and matrimonial cases. The

*kanthaka-sodhana* court tried criminal cases, including those of misconduct of officials. Each had three judges. The civil law of the time contained elaborate rules about contract, procedure, etc. There were boards of arbitrators (*panchayats*) appointed by officials. Religious cases were tried by *parishads*. Cases were heard in the morning. 'There were such courts in every city which was the centre of villages (*samgrahana*), in every town on sea or river, at the meeting points of districts, as well as in the capital cities.' It is interesting that perjury was punished severely. As test of truth, sacred law (*dharma*) was preferred to evidence of witnesses as well as to custom (*vyavahara and charitra*). But the king's ordinance (*Raja-sasana*) based on reason was held authoritative 'for, in respect of that matter, the original text on which the sacred law was based is not available.'

### Military System

Megasthenes described the enormous standing army, efficiently maintained and equipped by the government. Chandragupta's infantry was three times that of the Nandas, and his cavalry one and a half times; and amounted to 600,000 and 30,000 respectively. Though Asoka gave up wars after his conquest of Kalinga, we do not hear of any retrenchment in military strength or expenditure.

The War Office was in six departments. The older four were efficiently organized. Elephants were used in war to pull chariots. They were 'so teachable that they could learn to throw stones at a mark and to use arms.' The war elephant carried three fighting men, besides the driver—two who shot from the sides and one from behind. Two fighting men sat up in the chariot beside the charioteer. The infantry consisted of hereditary troops, and mercenary guild troops, who were a sort of defence-force used for short expeditions and were less quickly assembled than the forest tribes. But Kautilya says that it was on the elephants that the destruction of the enemy's army depended. To these four limbs of the army Megasthenes adds two new departments : the Admiralty, and supply and service. The last included drummers' mechanics, grooms and grass-cutters. Kautilya mentions that fixed and mobile engines such as the *sataghni* were in use, and that the arts of mining, countermining and flooding mines were known and employed. The army must therefore have contained a number of mechanics, artisans and camp-followers. An army medical corps was provided,



including doctors and nurses. There were sappers and miners and, possibly, a corps of airmen.

As regards the Admiralty department, Kautilya says that it let ships out on hire for the transport of passengers and of merchandise. There were mechanical contrivances (*Srotoyantra*). Ships were of various classes—ocean-going ones which touched at harbours (*samyatyah*), merchantmen (*pravahana*), yachts used in pearl-fisheries (*grahinyah*), vessels used in navigable rivers (*mahanavah*), tiny craft (*kshudrakah*) and pirate boats (*himsrikah*). It was the business of the Lord Admiral to see that the last were pursued and destroyed and that the use of the others was regulated. He was helped by a Superintendent of Ocean Mines.

### Public Works

The Public Works Department is prominently in evidence. We are told that irrigation works were under the Superintendent of the Admiralty. The department measured lands and gave everyone his fair share of water. A rain gauge is mentioned. There was a regular system of navigable canals and rivers (*kulya*). Coastal traffic (*kulapatha*) and ocean routes on the high seas are mentioned. Roads were maintained in order, with pillars set up to serve as sign-posts and with mile-stones. Grand Trunk Roads connected the various parts of the empire with the capital.

Evidence of the attention paid to irrigation, even in the remotest provinces of the empire, comes to us from a strange source. The Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman records how Chandragupta's brother-in-law formed the Sudarsana lake by damming up a small stream and how the supplementary canals and water-courses were constructed by Asoka.

The duties of the Public Works Department included the planting of trees. These were in avenues for shade and shelter along roads, or in gardens of fruits like the mango (*amravatika*), as such were laid out under the directions of one of Asoka's queens. Asoka had also herb-gardens attached to hospitals, where there were medicinal arrangements for animals as well as for men. Such work extended not only to the frontiers of the empire but to the neighbouring kingdoms as well. The department was also incharge of the forests.

### Quasi-Political Organisations

The state considered it its duty to found and encourage public institutions, which were, in some cases, of political significance. Of this class are the institutions known as *samaja*, *vimana* and *darsana* mentioned in the Asoka inscriptions, and referred to here and there in Sanskrit and Pali texts.

The *Samaja* (*Samajjo*) is described in the *Sigalovada Sutta*. It was a social gathering usually attended with dancing, music, recitations, conjuring tricks and acrobatic shows. From the *Vinaya* texts we learn of a *samajjo* and that, at it, not only amusements but also food was provided; that high officials were invited and had special seats; and that it took place at the top of a hill. Rhys Davids considers this last detail of high places, i.e., sacred places, as pointing to a religious motive actuating the whole proceeding. But we have a reference in the *Ramayana* to a *samaja* held in connection with the triumphal entry of the king. It appears therefore that the *samaja* was a convivial gathering, and had the nature of a political triumph or demonstration. It is used in this sense in the Jataka texts. Meat and wine were in use, and this accounts for Asoka's forbidding such festivals.

*Vimana* is described in the *Vimanavattu*. It was a public gathering at which sacred symbols or divine images installed in aerial chariots were shown to the people, and instructions were given on the relation of a virtuous or vicious life of the life after death. These occasions were of socio-religious significance, and therefore, Asoka encouraged them. Such observances continued later both among the Buddhists and the Jains.

Kautilya mentions *utsavas* and *pravahanas* as popular institutions, which it was the business of the state to encourage and to regulate: 'The king shall go to witness festive trades, fairs, processions and sacrificial performances when they are regulated by bands of police.' In one place he asks the king to take advantage of the *pravahana* to test the fidelity of his ministers. *Utsavas* were to be encouraged, and were marks of a city under prosperous rule.

The *darsanas* mentioned by Asoka refer to *divyarupas*, i.e., the exhibition of divine beings, like the Buddha as elephant (*hasti*). Sometimes there were fireworks (*agniskandha*). Sometimes there were also theatrical performances, and action-songs illustrated by paintings

and pictures. Patanjali refers to these as the work of *Saubhikas* and *Chitrapatikas*. The *Saubhikas* showed, for instance, the slaying of Kamsa by Krishna on the stage : and the *Chitrapatikas* represented the same scene to illustrate the recitations of the *Grandhikas*. These exhibitions continued much later, as is shown by the reference to the *Yamapatika* or the narrative of the story of Yama, in Bana's *Harshacharita*.

Already before the Mauryan age there were different social groups. Kautilya mentions *desasangha*, *jatisangha* and *kulasangha*, which shows that each group had its own corporate life. The discussions among these bodies are reflected in the *Arthashastra*, which enjoins spies in pairs to resort to discussions in the *tirtha*, *sabha*, *sala*, *puga* and *jana*. *Tirtha* is a sacred bath, *sala* an educational or feeding house, and *jana* a nondescript gathering. *Puga* was an economic organisation consisting of men of several castes. We are reminded of the *Mahabharata*, where there is similar mention of bringing about a split in the corporation so as to overcome them. It shows that there were parties, some of whom were loyalists (*upasritah*), others conciliated (*samsritah*); and an outer circle of the hostile, who were to be subdued by sowing the seeds of dissension among them. Kautilya would agree with this policy, as the *sanghas* were invincible by any other means.

### Political Thought

Greek references to a school of political philosophers known as Brachmanoi show that political thought was not only existent but effective in this period. The doctrines of the earlier schools were very much in the air, and Kautilya often refers to them, whether in support of his own view or, more often, as holding views which it was easy to controvert. Three of them are associated with Manu, Sukra and Brhaspati, whose doctrines were codified in a later period. And there are a few thinkers, Ghotamukha, Charayana, Kinjalka and Pisuna's son, to whom there is reference only in a single passage. But on controversial issues of importance Kautilya mentions in regular order seven other writers, whose views may now be put together.

Bharadvaja invariably emphasises the importance of ministers, and he probably lived in an age of do-nothing kings and self-sacrificing ministers. He would have the king rely on a single minister, who was to be selected from among his classmates and was to be his confidant

and *alter ego*. Even the crown prince was a necessary evil, and was to be immured for the king's safety. A weak king was to surrender before his stronger rival. When the kingship came to be in jeopardy, the minister was to take the throne. Love and anger had their uses for the king, among the various political expedients. It is no wonder that the inaugurator of these views should be regarded in later ages as 'a crooked politician'. His doctrines would apply, granted such ministers as Yaugandharayana of Kausambi, whose safety might be regarded as even more important to the state than of the king, as they could deliver both the king and the state from any scrapes or compromising political situations.

Visalaksha was against autocracy, and championed the cause of the people. He regarded the state as quite secure if the king did not act against popular interests or irritate public opinion by indiscreet utterances. Ministers were never to be in a position to act against the king's will, though they were to give him the benefit of their intelligent advice and opinion. He would have the princes carefully protected. Parasara was an advocate of fortresses. He would lock up disaffected princes in citadels, and use these as places of refuge for loyal subjects in times of distress. Pisuna was an economist, and would replenish the treasury at any cost. He would have the minister of finance as the premier, and would even allow the king to gamble, if it would yield revenue. Kaunapadanta would base the rule on force, and would sacrifice all other considerations to the efficiency of a citizen-army which would support the administration of hereditary ministers. Vatavyadhi considered the acquisition of allies as the greatest asset, in war and peace. He would even under-estimate the evil effects of drink on the king on account of its social advantages.

It is clear that the speculations of these schools were responsible for the evolution of the doctrine of the seven elements of sovereignty or seven props of political power—monarch, ministry, forts, finance, population, army and allies. Every school was partial to one of these factors as contributing to the stability of states. Kautilya's own contribution to the discussion is significant. His view is that the relative importance of the various factors was to be gauged from the circumstances. Taking the *conjuncture* of the forces, a statesman was to decide how much of a factor he could afford to sacrifice for the time being, having regard to the political aim then in view, and to the mutual influences of the factors themselves. It is obvious that Kautilya relaxes

the rigidity of the political canons, in accordance with the pliability of circumstances and the mutability of political conditions.

The end of the state is clearly defined. It was merely an agency for the protection of the people in their pursuit of what was the highest and the noblest in life, in such a fashion that it did not interfere with the rights of others in pursuit of similar aims. The king was therefore to enable each order of society (*varna*) and men in each station and grade of life (*asrama*) to fulfil their functions safely and efficiently. He was to act in accordance with the social and ethical canons of *dharma* laid down in the *sastras*.

The state was never to neglect the native instincts of local groups and communities, so far as they were consistent with this principle. Local laws, customs and traditions (*sangraha*) were maintained in the administration of justice, and foreign traders had the right to be adjudged by their own laws. The king was to preserve the customary laws in conquered territories. Local contracts, and agreements entered into by the members of an association among themselves, were legally valid and enforced by the state.

The king was to regard himself only as an agent of the people in accordance with the original theory of social contract. He was to identify his interests with those of the people, irrespective of his individual views and inclinations. Kings who lost their head and fell into a temper were deposed or exiled by the righteous indignation of their subjects. It was impossible to base one's right to rule on might alone, for force was futile in repressing sedition among the leaders of the people. It was not enough to consider what was for the good of the subjects. In politics or the art of government what mattered was how the people took it, how they felt in regard to a measure, however, beneficial, it might ultimately prove to be. It follows that the king had the duty of educating the people as to what was best for them. It was thought that this result would be best achieved if both the government and the governed followed what was laid down for the good of the State by sages of intellect, and men free from selfish considerations.

The class of men who laid down the law as to the ultimate good might abuse their trust and degenerate into a close and narrow sacerdotalism. But this result was obviated in India. In the first place, the philosophers lived far away in forest retreats, and were detached

from the burning politics of the day. Secondly, there was the body of *Dharma* doctrine handed down through the ages, and their actions had to be in conformity with this, as its principles were held to be of potency, independent of time and place. Thirdly, this class of people had no organization, no acknowledged leaders, no machinery for concerted action. They were not concentrated in cities, but distributed far and wide in India. Lastly, while the Brahman had the power of thought only, the Kshatriya had wordly power, and the Vaisya the sinews of power in industry and commerce.

It is important to emphasise the fact that the State was not regarded as the ultimate good, but only as a means of attaining the highest good. If there was no facility in a kingdom for leading the highest life, the only course open was to leave it and to migrate to more congenial tracts. Even in normal times, the king was dependent on the ministry in internal as well as external affairs. There was thus no danger of an unbridled despotism.

### Inter-State Relations

The system of diplomacy, helped by an elaborate use of espionage, was responsible for the Mauryan revolution in Magadha. It was due to the philosophy of Kautilya, who exalts the importance of diplomacy (*mantrasakti*) over direct action or resources. Indian diplomacy was characterised by the use of a code-language and systems of cipher-writing. Two such systems have now come down to us—those of Kautilya and Muladeva. It was by diplomacy that the strength of the republics (*kulasangha*) was undermined by an ambitious emperor. The Mauryan emperors received ambassadors from foreign princes and sent ambassadors to other lands. The *dutaka* was often a prince with delegated powers. At the close of the Mauryan period, the fortunes of the declining empire were bolstered up by the diplomacy of Muladeva, who plotted the overthrow of the Sungas. In the succeeding century began the diplomatic relations between China and the foreign dynasties in India. Indian ambassadors were insulted and imprisoned in China, but the person of the foreign envoy was held sacred and inviolable in India. Even in the remote west coast, Nambudiri Brahmans were used as envoys.

We have good examples in the epithets Anjaneya for Hanumana; Kuntimata applied to Bhima and Kaunteya to Arjuna. The child was

taught that he was a brother to the Nature's dumb creation, to the guileless calf of the milchcow and even to the noisy Indian crow. The high rocks and giant trees were to him embodiments of a mysterious power which he was taught to reverence. Nature's phenomena like thunder and lightning were explained as the results of the working of this Unseen Being, as much as the soft stillness of the night and the motions of the spheres. He was led from Nature to Nature's God. This was the foundation of his spiritual training.

The family under the guidance of the father was the next factor in the child's education. Kalidas calls a child 'well-trained at home' as 'having a real father' and exhorts each and every father to bring up his children according to the religious instructions by example as well as by precept. Pestalozzi says that life educates more than the school and that the centre of elementary education is the sympathy of ideas, the speech and the intelligent activities of a well-organised family-life. The Hindu joint family furnished the child with his first lessons in the art of co-operation. It is the schooling ground of the social virtues—of sympathy with distress, of unselfish affection, of a gratitude for service, of regard for elders, of social service without a sense of patronage and of self-sacrifice in the interest of the other members of the community. In family life alone, in other words, is there complete provision for what Froebel calls 'the fundamental need of childhood'—self-expression.

The Indian home was not so much a preparation for the school as a supplement to it. The father, sitting under the bounteous mango or the shady banyan and the grand-mother at her leisure, kindled not only the child's love of Nature but his interest in literature, by telling him stories and reading aloud to him extracts from the golden deeds of the epic heroes and heroines. The child's personality was worked and developed and his work assessed and appreciated in his treatment of nursery rhymes as well as in the reproduction of these stories. In a joint family, trained to share what he had with others one could expect the idea of giving foremost in the mind of every juvenile Nachiketas and the incipient spirit of commercialism clean wiped out of his mind. Thus, the Indian family training did not aim at enabling the child to be useful to the family at the earliest possible moment by training him in some practical art but aimed at the harmonious development of his powers.

# 3

## Kingship and Administration

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### Chandragupta

The credit of freeing the country from the yoke of the Greeks is unanimously assigned to Chandragupta. The early career of this hero is all but unknown, although the brilliant achievements of his later life have surrounded his memory with a host of legends. Later Brahmanical texts represent him as the son of a Nanda king of Magadha, by a low-born woman named Mura, from whom the dynastic name Maurya is supposed to have been derived. According to Buddhist chronicles, which are earlier in date, Chandragupta was a Kshatriya. It is probable, that Chandragupta belonged to the Kshatriya clan which is referred to as Moriyas of Pipphalivana in the Mahaparinivvana Sutta. According to this Buddhist Sutra, the Moriyas were a wellknown republican clan as far back as the time of Gautama Buddha.

There are good reasons to believe, that the splendid success of Chandragupta was due, as much to his own military genius, as to the statesmanship of his Prime Minister Kautilya. Chandragupta drove away the Greek garrison from the Panjab and Sindh and made himself master of these provinces. He then ascended the throne of Magadha by uprooting the Nanda dynasty about 322 B.C., and by a series of brilliant military conquests, established a vast empire stretching from the bank of the Sindhu to the mouth of the Ganga. It is extremely fortunate that he did so, for ere long he had to meet with a terrible foe. Seleucus, one of the ablest generals of Alexander, obtained possession of the Asiatic dominions of his master, and after organising his empire from Syria to Afghanistan, he proceeded to take possession of the Panjab. The desire was neither unnatural, nor illegitimate, in



view of the recent conquests of Alexander, but, unfortunately for Seleucus, he had to reckon with a foe of a quite different character. The Punjab was no longer parcelled out among numerous petty chieftains, unable or unwilling to make a common cause against a foreign invader. It was part of a well-organised empire, at the head of which stood a great military genius, and a farsighted politician. Singularly enough, the classical writers do not give any details of the conflict between Seleucus and Chandragupta. Some have therefore expressed doubt about any contest having actually taken place between them.

The otherwise inexplicable silence of the classical writers, as well as the net result of the expedition, however, clearly indicate that Seleucus met with a miserable failure. For he had not only to finally abandon the idea of reconquering the Punjab, but had to buy peace by ceding Paropanisadai, Arachosia, and Aria, three rich provinces with the cities now known as Kabul, Kandahar and Herat respectively as their capitals, and also Gedrosia (Baluchistan), or at least a part of it. The victorious Maurya king probably married the daughter of his Greek rival, and made a present of five hundred elephants to his royal father-in-law. Some Greek writers have represented this gift as the price of the rich provinces ceded by Seleucus, which is of course absurd. It is difficult to believe that Seleucus would have readily agreed to part with his rich provinces for such paltry gifts unless he were forced to do so. It is, therefore, legitimate to hold that Seleucus was worsted in his fight with Chandragupta.

The conflict between Seleucus and Chandragupta Maurya, if any, must be looked upon as the nearest approximation to a fair trial of strength between the Greek and Indian military forces which history has recorded. The princelings in the Punjab can hardly be regarded as a fair match to Alexander, the greatest military genius the world has ever seen, backed by the resources of a mighty empire, extending over three continents, and stretching from the Adriatic to the Sindhu. But the empires of Seleucus and Chandragupta do not compare unfavourably in point of resources. Both of them had fought their way to the throne within recent years, and the generalship of both was as fair a specimen as their countries could normally show. If, then, according to Dr. V. Smith, "the triumphant progress of Alexander from the Himalaya to the sea demonstrated the inherent weakness of the greatest Asiatic armies when confronted with European skill and

discipline," it may be said, with far greater logic, that the triumph of Chandragupta over Seleucus demonstrated the inherent weakness of the greatest Hellenic armies when confronted with Indian skill and discipline.

### **THE MAURYA EMPIRE**

The defeat inflicted upon the Greek hosts of Seleucus enabled Chandragupta to consolidate his mighty empire. It is unfortunately not yet possible to write a detailed account of his brilliant career. Nor can we trace the gradual steps by which an all-India empire, the unrealised dream of ages to come, was gradually brought into being. The available evidence, however, leaves no doubt, that during the reigns of Chandragupta and his son and successor Bindusara, not only the whole of the Deccan, excepting the eastern coastal region, formed part of their empire, but even a considerable part of South Indian Peninsula was either incorporated in their dominions or was brought within their sphere of influence. The Tamil poet Mamulanar, who flourished about the second or third century A.D., refers to a military expedition sent by the Moriar to reduce some Tamil chiefs in the South. The epithet Vamba (newly-risen) applied to Moriar seems to indicate that the reference here is to the early Maurya Emperor Chandragupta or Bindusara. The arms of the Mauryas were thus carried almost to the southern extremity of the Indian Peninsula, and the Maurya banner wafted across the vast stretch of land, from Herat in the north-west, to Madura in the South.

India was now a leading power in the world, and maintained diplomatic relations with outside countries. The House of Seleucus sent regular embassies to the Court of Pataliputra. We know, in particular, two of these ambassadors, viz. Megasthenes, who lived in the Court of Chandragupta, and Daimachus who replaced him at the time of Bindusara. We also hear of the exchange of friendly letters between Bindusara and Antiochus, the son and successor of Seleucus. There are also reasons to believe that diplomatic relations existed about this time between India on the one side, and China and the Central Asiatic powers on the other. Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Greek ruler of Egypt, also sent an embassy to the court of the Mauryas. The Maurya rulers, too, despatched messengers to far-off countries, as will be described in the next section.

A good idea of the power and magnificence of the Magadha empire about this period may be formed from the account of Megasthenes and other Greek writers. The vast empire maintained a highly organised and well-equipped army, consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. The regular military establishment consisted of '600,000 infantry, 30,000 horsemen, 36,000 men with 9,000 elephants, and 24,000 men with nearly 8,000 chariots, or 690,000 men in all excluding followers and attendants.'

There was a highly organised system of military administration. Six Boards, consisting of five members each, looked after the six Departments, viz. (1) Admiralty; (2) Transport, Commissariat etc.; (3) Cavalry; (4) Infantry; (5) Chariots, and (6) Elephants. The thirty members were no doubt collectively responsible for the whole military organisation.

The capital, Pataliputra (modern Patna), at the confluence of the Ganga and the Sone rivers, was the greatest city in India. It was about 9 miles in length and a mile and a half in breadth. The wooden wall of the city, probably built of massive Sal tree, had sixty-four gates, and was crowned with 570 towers. Surrounding the wall was a ditch, 'six hundred feet in breadth, and thirty cubits in depth.' The royal palace within the city was one of the finest in the whole world, and its 'gilded pillars, adorned with golden vines and silver birds' extorted the admiration of Greeks. The municipal arrangements, too, were highly satisfactory. A commission of thirty members administered the city. They were divided into six Boards of five members each. The members of the first Board looked after everything relating to the industrial arts. Those of the second looked after the comforts of the foreigners, resident in the city. The third recorded the births and deaths, while the fourth superintended trade and commerce. The fifth Board supervised manufactured articles, and the sixth collected the tenths of the prices of the articles sold. But, apart from the functions which these bodies separately discharged, the whole commission, in its collective capacity, looked after matters of general interest, such as the keeping of public buildings in proper repair, the regulation of prices, and the supervision of markets, harbours and temples. There can be scarcely any doubt that this system of municipal administration prevailed in a large number of cities in the empire.

The Maurya emperor himself probably administered the government of Magadha and surrounding territories only. The distant provinces were under Viceroys, who were very often selected from the royal family. The Central Government kept watch over their administration by means of a class of persons called news-writers. Both in the Central Government, as well as in the provinces, the administration was carried on by a number of departments, each under a Superintendent, aided by a host of ministerial officers. There was a highly organised bureaucracy which efficiently managed the affairs of the vast empire. The different parts of the empire were connected by high-roads, one of them traversing the whole breadth of India from the Sindhu to the mouth of the Ganga. Irrigation works were undertaken even in such distant parts of the empire as the Kathiawar Peninsula, and, on the whole, the efficiency of the government was combined with peace, prosperity and contentment of the people.

### Asoka The Great

Chandragupta and Bindusara ruled for nearly half a century, and in or about 273 B.C., the throne of Magadha passed on to Asoka, one of the greatest names in the history of the world. No figure in ancient Indian history is more familiar to us, and none leaves a more abiding impression of a towering personality, than this immortal son of Bindusara.

This is mainly due to the fact that for the first time in Indian history we come across original personal records of a king, composed probably by himself, engraved on imperishable rocks and stone-pillars. The inscriptions of Asoka furnish a wealth of details about his life and reign such as we do not possess about any other king in ancient India. The more important of these inscriptions may be classified as follows :

(i) *Fourteen Rock Edicts* : A set of fourteen inscriptions incised on rocks at eight different places, viz. Shahbazgarhi (Peshawar District), Mansehra (Hazara District), Kalsi (Dehra Dun District), Girnar (near Junagadh in Kathiawar), Sopara (Thana District, Bombay), Dhauli and Jaugada (Orissa), and Yerragudi (Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, eight miles from Gooty Railway Station). This distribution is to be particularly noted as it is a valuable direct evidence of the great extent of the Maurya Empire.

(ii) *Minor Rock Edicts* : An edict incised on rocks at thirteen different places, viz. Rupnath (Jubbulpur District), Bairat, (Jaipur State, Rajputana), Sasaram (Shahabad District, Bihar), Maski (Raichur District), Gavimath and Palkigundu (Kopbal Taluk in Mysore), Gujarra (Datia District, Madhya Pradesh), Ahraura (Mirzapur District, U.P.) Rajula-Mandagiri (3 miles NNW of Pattikonda in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh), Yerragudi, and three neighbouring places in Chitaldrug district in Mysore. The last five also contain a Supplementary edict (No. II).

(iii) *Seven Pillar Edicts* : These were engraved on six fine monolith pillars. The complete set of seven edicts is found only on a single pillar now at Delhi (removed from a place called Topra). The other pillars, found mostly in North Bihar, contain only six of the edicts. One of these, now at Delhi, was brought from Mirat.

(iv) The remaining inscriptions engraved on rock, pillars and walls of caves, are of miscellaneous character. The most important of these, engraved on a pillar at Rumindei (Nepal Terai), records the visit of Asoka to the place (Lumvinivana) where Gautama Buddha was born, and marks that very site. Two short inscriptions, written in Aramaic script, have been found, one in Taxila, and the other in Jalalabad District, Afghanistan. A bilingual inscription, written in Greek and Aramaic, has been found on a rock at Shar-i-Kuna near Kandahar in Afghanistan.

These inscriptions supply the most valuable data for reconstructing the history of Asoka. Unfortunately, they tell us nothing about the early years of his reign, for which we have to depend solely on Buddhist traditions recorded in chronicles of a much later age. According to these, Asoka was cruel and bloodthirsty, and seized the throne by killing his ninety-eight brothers. Many other stories are told of his ferocious nature which earned him the title Chandasoka (ferocious Asoka). These are hardly credible, and were undoubtedly intended to bring out in greater contrast his subsequent career influenced by Buddhism when he came to be known as Dharmasoka (religious Asoka). As to the story of killing all his brothers, it is interesting to note that in the records engraved long after his accession to the throne, Asoka expressed great solicitude for the families of his brothers and referred to them in endearing terms. In any case the stories of Chandasoka cannot be regarded as sober facts of history.

The same sources inform us that Asoka was not formally consecrated till four years after his accession to the throne. This has been generally accepted by modern scholars, but its truth may be doubted, particularly as the long delay is alleged to have been caused mainly by the fratricidal war for succession to the throne.

The earliest event of Asoka's reign, of which we possess reliable information, is his conquest of Kalinga, in the ninth year after his consecration to the throne. Kalinga usually denoted the long stretch of territory on the Eastern Coast of Indian between the river Suvarnarekha and Godavari, but its exact limits in the days of Asoka cannot be determined. There is no doubt however, that it was a populous and powerful state. The thirteenth Rock Edict of Asoka gives a vivid account of the conquest of Kalinga after a terrible war in course of which 150,000 persons were captured, 100,000 were slain, and many times that number perished. Asoka, who probably led the campaign in person, was struck by the horrors of the war and the amount of misery and bloodshed it involved. The feelings which they evoked in him are thus described in his inscription, probably in his own words :

"Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country, previously unconquered, involves the slaughter, death and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty.

"There is, however, another reason for His Sacred Majesty feeling still more regret, inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmans or ascetics, or men of various denominations, or householders....To such people in such a country befalls violence, or slaughter, or separation from their loved ones. Or misfortune befalls the friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives of those who are themselves well protected, while their affection is undiminished. Thus for them also that is a mode of violence."

The feeling of remorse and misery led Asoka to embrace the Buddhist religion, one of whose cardinal doctrines was non-injury to living beings. For about two years and a half Asoka remained a lay disciple; then he formally joined the Buddhist Order and became a Bhikkhu. From that time he exerted himself strenuously to propagate the religion in which he found the solace and comfort of his life. The means by which he sought to achieve this end were varied in character and have been graphically described in his own records. As early as

the 11th year the emperor commenced a series of pious tours all over the country, spreading the gospels of his religion by his personal effort. He visited the holy places of Buddhism and wherever he went he arranged discussions on religious subjects. He instructed his high officials to proceed on circuit every five years and, in addition to their proper business, to spread the *dharma* (religious doctrines) among the people at large. Besides, he instituted a special class of officers called Dharma-mahamatras whose sole business was to propagate *dharma* among the people. He also convoked a general Council of the Buddhists to settle internal differences. This was the Third General Council.

The Emperor organised a network of missions to preach the gospels in countries far-off and near. His missionaries visited not only the different parts of India and Ceylon, but also Western Asia, Egypt and Eastern Europe. Of the foreign kings, whose dominions thus received the message of the Buddha, five are mentioned in the inscriptions of Asoka by name, viz. Antiochus Theos, king of Syria and Western Asia, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus. The names of the missionaries, whose sphere of work lay in India proper, are preserved in the Ceylonese literature. The relic caskets, unearthed about seventy years ago at Bhilsa, bear the names of some of them and vividly bring home to us the wonderful missionary activity of Asoka. The great emperor even sent his own children, his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra, to preach the religion in Ceylon.

But by far the most novel means adopted by the emperor to make the people realise the blessed doctrines of the Buddha, was to engrave them on rocks, pillars and caves, throughout his vast dominions. Many of them have been lost, but we still possess about thirty-five separate records, which, in some respects, are the most wonderful that antiquity has bequeathed to us. They contain a glowing personal narrative of the emperor, and give a detailed account of what he believed to be the *dharma*, and of what he did to bring it home to the millions of his subjects. The emperor was urged on by an anxious desire to uplift the morality of the people, by bringing home of them the essential features of his *dharma*. So he engraved these on imperishable stones, which even today, after the lapse of more than two thousand years, stand as an undying monument to his purity of life and sublimity of thoughts. The aspect of *dharma* which he emphasised was a code of morality,

rather than a system of religion. He never discussed metaphysical doctrines, nor referred to God or soul, but simply asked the people to have control over their passions, to cultivate purity of life and character in inmost thoughts, to be tolerant to other's religion, to abstain from killing or injuring animals and to have regard for them, to be charitable to all, to behave with decorum to parents, teachers, relatives, friends and ascetics, to treat slaves and servants kindly, and, above all, to tell the truth.

The emperor not only preached these truths but also practised them. He forswore hunting and gave up meat diet. He established hospitals for men and beasts, not only throughout his vast empire, but also in the dominions of his neighbouring kings. He made liberal donations to the Brahmanas and followers of other religions. We read in his records, how, on the roads, he had rest-houses erected, and also caused wells to be dug and trees to be planted, for the use of men and beasts. He also issued various regulations to prevent the slaughter of animals.

As a result of Asoka's wonderful zeal and activities Buddhism, which was till then confined to an insignificant sect, was transformed into a world religion. He forswore the aggressive imperial policy of his forefathers and pursued instead the ideal of conquering the world by means of *dharma* (Law of Piety). In this object he succeeded to an extent beyond his wildest dreams. For it must be set largely to his credit that even today, more than two thousand years after his death, one-third of the people of the world follow the teachings of Buddha.

The most remarkable thing about Asoka is that his ardour for Buddhism, great as it was, never made him neglect his duties as a king. As a matter of fact he may be justly regarded as one of the greatest monarchs in the whole world, ancient or modern. His conception of duties and responsibilities of a king, the zeal with which he pursued his ideals, and the extent to which he succeeded in giving effect to them—all alike are worthy of the highest praise. Probably no ruler ever expressed the relation between the king and his subjects in a simpler and nobler language. "All men are my children," said he, "and just as I desire for my children that they may enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness, in both this world and the next, so also I desire the same for all men." Again he wrote in the same strain : "Just as a man, having made over his child to a skilful nurse, feels confident and says



to himself, 'The skilful nurse is zealous to take care of my child's happiness,' even so my officials have been created for the welfare and happiness of the country."

Asoka's zeal for public business, and his sense of responsibility for the sacred trust imposed on him as king, are well exemplified by another record. "For a long time past," runs the royal edict, "it has not happened that business has been dispatched and that reports have been received at all hours. Now by me this arrangement has been made that at all hours and in all places—whether I am dining, or in the ladies' apartments, in my bedroom, or in my closet, in my carriage, or in the palace gardens—the official Reporters should report to me on the people's business, and I am ready to do the people's business in all places....I have commanded that immediate report must be made to me at any hour and in any palace, because I never feel full satisfaction in my efforts and dispatch of business. For the welfare of all folk is what I must work for—and the root of that, again, is in effort and the dispatch of business. And whatsoever exertions I make are for the end that I may discharge my debt to animate beings, and that while I make some happy here, they may in the next world gain heaven."

Asoka's conception of kingly duties was thus very noble. He did not take any credit for his great exertions to secure the welfare of the people, for in his views he merely discharged his debt thereby. And the welfare of the people he understood in the broadest sense—not only the security of life and property together with material prosperity here below, but also moral elevation leading to perpetual happiness hereafter. This conception of his duty was the logical outcome of his famous doctrine that all men are the children of the king. Just as a father ought not to rest satisfied by merely advancing the material prosperity of his children, but should also see to their moral development, in very much the same way the king should concern himself with both the material and the moral well-being of his subjects. This led Asoka to adopt those extensive measures for the propagation of moral doctrines among his people to which reference has been made above. The same idea, again, is at least partly responsible for his assumption of the headship of the Buddhist Church. But Asoka was not merely a great theorist; he was also an able administrator. In spite of his religious proclivities and avowed policy of non-aggression, he maintained peace and prosperity over his vast empire. As noted above, he annexed Kalinga after a hard-

fought battle. It appears that the Tamil lands in the extreme south were lost to the Maurya Empire, but whether they broke off during Asoka's reign or before his accession, it is difficult to say. It is certain, however, that in the 13th year of the reign of Asoka, the Tamil kingdoms of Chera, Chola, Pandya and Satyaputra were independent states, and the southern boundary of the Maurya empire was formed approximately by a line drawn from Nellore to the mouth of Kalyanapuri river on the western coast. But it comprised the rest of India proper (excluding probably Assam), in addition to modern Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Certain territories within this vast area enjoyed autonomy in internal administration, like the Native States in British India, while the rest of the empire was governed by a number of Viceroys, who had their seats of government at provincial capitals such as Suvarnagiri, Tosali, Takshasila and Ujjayni. The vast organisation seems to have worked fairly well, and the magnificent works of art that Asoka has left behind, and prove beyond all doubt, that the empire reached the high watermark of greatness and glory under him.

The Empire of Asoka was not only vast in extent but was closely knit together as an administrative unit. One imperial writ ran from Peshawar to Bengal, and from Kashmir to Mysore. This never happened again in ancient India, and was but rarely witnessed before the middle of the 19th century A.D. Asoka's inscriptions further prove that there was one common language for the whole empire, and the same script was current except in a small region in the extreme North-West Asokan Empire thus brought about that political and cultural unity which is the dream of modern India, symbolised by her emblem of the capital of an Asokan Pillar.

Several other circumstances make the reign of Asoka a memorable one. The earliest written record in India dates from his reign. His inscriptions, excluding the three written in Greek or Aramaic script, are engraved in two types of alphabets. The first, called Kharoshthi, derived from Aramaic, was confined to those at Shahbazgarhi and Maneshra, and soon went out of use. But the second, known as Brahmi, used in all the other inscriptions, is the earliest Indian alphabet known to us, and all the Indian alphabetic systems known today are ultimately derived from it.

Similarly, the history of Indian art practically begins from Asoka's reign. For, excluding the prehistoric examples found in the Sindhu

Valley no other specimen of fine art has come down to us which may be definitely dated before the time of Asoka. Asoka seems to have introduced the art of building in stone, and although only a few specimens of his numerous works have survived, they form the first, though a brilliant, chapter in the continuous history of Indian art. Indeed, his monolithic stone pillars, with their remarkable polish and still more wonderful animal sculptures on the top, still remain not only unsurpassed, but even unapproached anywhere in the world. But these will be more conveniently dealt with in the chapter on art.

### **Downfall of the Empire**

Asoka died about 232 B.C., and seven kings followed him in regular succession, during a period of about fifty years. No detailed account of these kings is known to us, but the disruption of the empire began within almost a decade after the death of Asoka. The Andhras, a powerful tribe in the Deccan, enjoying internal autonomy during Asoka's rule, raised the banner of revolt, and freed the country south of the Vindhyas from the yoke of the Mauryas. The Mauryas ruled over the empire in Northern India till about 185 B.C., when they, succumbed to internal dissensions and invasions from abroad.

It is necessary to go back a little, in order to understand aright the foreign invasions which brought about the downfall of the Mauryas. As has already been related, Seleucus and his descendants ruled from Syria over the whole of Western Asia up to the Hindu Kush mountains. About 250 B.C., Bactria and Parthia, two provinces of this vast empire, revolted against the Seleucid dynasty, and declared their independence. The Greek Governor of Bactria and his successors formed a line of independent Greek rulers to the north of the Hindu Kush, while a national government was established in Parthia, the eastern part of modern Persia, by a native chief named Arsaces. The Seleucid emperors tried in vain to assert their supremacy over the revolted states, and Antiochus III led a campaign to Bactria with this object. But he failed and at last virtually acknowledged the independence of both Bactria and Parthia about 208 B.C. Shortly after this, the Graeco-Bactrian kings turned their eyes towards India. Demetrius, the son of the ruling king, and son-in-law of Antiochus III, invaded India about 190 B.C. and wrested from the Maurya Emperor Brihadratha, seventh in descent from Asoka, a considerable portion of his empire in the north-west.

The successful revolt of the Andhras, the victorious raid of the Greek king, probably far into the interior of the Magadha empire, and the loss of the northwestern dominions gave a terrible blow to the power and prestige of the Maurya empire. Apparently taking advantage of this state of confusion, Pushyamitra, the commander-in-chief of Brihadratha, made a plot against his royal master, and killed him, while engaged in reviewing the army. Thus, ended the dynasty of Chandragupta and Asoka after a rule of about 137 years (322-185 B.C.).

Pushyamitra was a traitor and regicide, but some modern historians have condoned his crime by holding it up as a necessity for saving the country. Too little is, however, known of the actual circumstances of justify such a lenient view. Though Pushyamitra ascended the throne, curiously enough, he retained the old title *Senapati*. He made some amends for his foul crime by the energy he displayed in restoring order in the empire. There are reasons to believe that he successfully carried the arms of the Magadha empire up to the bank of the Sindhu and consummated his victories by the celebration of two *Asvamedha* sacrifices. The great grammarian Patanjali refers to one of these, and probably officiated as a priest on the occasion. We are told in the Sanskrit drama *Malavikagnimitram*, that Pushyamitra's valiant grandson Vasumitra, son of Agnimitra, the ruler of Vidisa (Bhilsa), guarded the sacrificial horse, and rescued it from the Yavanas or Greeks after a terrible fight on the banks of the Sindhu. It has been held by many that this Sindhu river denotes a small stream like the Kali Sindhu in Madhya Pradesh. But there is no valid reason why we should not identify the Sindhu of the drama with the famous river of that name. Intermittent fights with the Greeks continued throughout the reign of Pushyamitra and that of his descendants. Ultimately, the Punjab and Sindh were lost of the Magadha empire, and became the scene of contest for supremacy among the hosts of foreign invaders that began to pour into India. The emperor of Pataliputra probably still claimed allegiance, however nominal, from the rest of Northern India. But it was quite evident that his actual power was dwindling day by day, for hosts of independent states, monarchical and republican, gradually sprang up in different directions all over the country.

The power of the Sunga dynasty—such is the name by which that founded by Pushyamitra is known in history—originated in foul treachery, and it met its end in the same way. Devabhumi, the tenth

king of the dynasty, was of dissolute character and was killed at the instance of his minister Vasudeva. The ten kings of the Sunga dynasty ruled for a period of 112 years (185-73 B.C.).

The Kanva dynasty, founded by Vasudeva, comprised only four kings and ruled over the Magadha empire for a period of 45 years. The fourth king Suasman was overthrown by the Andhras to whom reference will be made later.

In the opinion of some modern scholars Asoka must be held primarily responsible for the downfall of the great empire. The empire was founded by a policy of blood and iron and could only be maintained by following the same policy. But by eschewing all wars and abandoning the aggressive imperial policy, Asoka weakened the very foundations of the empire. There is no doubt that he could easily have completed the political unity of India by conquering the Tamil lands in the extreme south, if he only cared to send a powerful army instead of Buddhist missionaries to that region. It is also urged that the lack of all military activities after the Kalinga war and the constant preaching of the great virtue of *ahimsa* (non-injury) by the Emperor in person had a permanent effect, not only on the military organisation of the state, but also on the martial qualities of the people in general. The soldiers lost their skill and discipline and Indians generally became averse to war. This is the main reason why the army which successfully resisted the onslaught of Seleucus failed against the less powerful Bactrian Greeks.

There may be some truth in these accusations. But it must be remembered that the end of the Maurya Empire did not differ materially from that of many other powerful empires in India, though there was nothing like the pacifist policy of Asoka to account for it. There were other factors at work, notably the weakness of the successors of Asoka and the wellknown centrifugal force in Indian politics. It may be easily surmised that the mighty Maurya Empire must have in any case come to an end sooner or later, even without the policy of Asoka. But this alone gave it the redeeming grace of having established a mighty moral force over an extensive portion of the world, and making an experiment of ending all wars, the necessity and wisdom of which did not again dawn upon the statesmen of the world till the second decade of the twentieth century A.D. Even if all the accusations against Asoka prove to be true, he may well take comfort in the idea that he anticipated, by

2175 years, the policy of universal peace which the world is now slowly realising to be the only means of salvation for mankind. A modern historian may well remember the great saying of Thucydides that all mortal glory is doomed to destruction, but the memory of greatness lives forever. The Maurya Empire has followed the way of all mundane glories, but the memory of Asoka will last forever.

# 4

## Foreign Invasions

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It has been already recorded that the Northwestern Provinces of the Magadha empire had been wrested by Demetrius, the Greek King of Bactria, about the beginning of the second century B.C. Demetrius was so successful in his Indian expedition that the Greek writers gave him the appellation of "King of the Indians". But while he was busy in India, the Bactrian throne was usurped by one Eucratides, and Demetrius tried in vain to dislodge him. Eucratides, though successful against Demetrius, was not destined to enjoy his ill-gotten power for long. He was cruelly murdered by his own son, who drove his chariot over the dead body of his father.

These internal dissensions among the Greeks probably gave Pushyamitra a good opportunity to recover some of the lost territories and restore order in the empire. But they were followed by other terrible consequences for the Greeks. While they were quarrelling among themselves, Bactria was invaded by the Scythian hordes, and the Greek sovereignty in the fair valley of the Oxus was extinguished forever (c. 120 B.C.). The Greeks, driven from Bactria, were forced to take shelter in their Indian dominions in Afghanistan and the Western Punjab, where they ruled for two hundred years more. There were rival dynasties ruling in different localities, and it is at present impossible to deal with them in a consecutive narrative. But the interesting fact remains that within this narrow enclave, cut off from the mainland of Greece, and all but unknown to the Greek historians, there flourished two or more principalities ruled over by about thirty Greek kings. These, rather than Alexander and his host, were instrumental in introducing some elements of Greek culture in India to which reference will be made later.

The names of these Greek rulers are known to us from their coins, but we hardly know anything about most of them. Of the few kings, who are known to us from other sources also, Menander, King Milinda of the Buddhist literature, is the most prominent. His capital was Sakala, the present Sialkot, and he seems to have led several victorious expeditions into the interior of Northern India. Another king Apollodotus, is also said to have conquered Kathiawar Peninsula. In general, however, the sovereignty of the Greek kings was confined to Afghanistan and the Punjab, and it is only at rare intervals that they temporarily carried their arms into the interior.

But the Greeks were not the only nation that harassed the Indian frontier. Several others followed in their wake, the most notable of them being the Parthians, the Sakas and the Kushanas. It has been already related how an independent national kingdom was established in Parthia, about the middle of the third century B.C., by a successful revolt against the Seleucid monarch of Syria. As early as the middle of the second century B.C., the Parthian king Mithradates I had carried his arms up to the Sindhu. At a later period, a powerful chief named Maues established a principality in the Western Punjab. About the same time a line of Parthian princes ruled in the Kandahar region, the most notable of them being Vonones and Azes. Towards the close of the first century A.D., Parthian chiefs were squabbling for power in lower Sindh. Some Parthian kings also ruled in the Peshawar valley. Great interest centres round one of these Indo-Parthian chiefs, named Gondophares, whose record has been found at Takht-i-Bahi (in N.W.F.P.). A very early Christian tradition affirms that the Apostle St. Thomas visited his court, and converted him and his family to Christianity.

The Sakas were at first a nomadic tribe, and lived on the northern bank of the river Jaxartes or Syr Daria. Being dispossessed of their homelands by another nomadic tribe, the Yueh-chi, they fell upon Bactria, and destroyed the Hellenistic monarchy in that province, as has already been related. Later on, they proceeded south and east, and entered India in various bands, through different ways. They must have formed a strong settlement on the bank of the Helmund river, as the region was called Sakasthana (now corrupted into Seistan) after them. In India, we can clearly trace three important Saka principalities. Two of them were in Northern India, and had Mathura and Takshasila as



their respective capitals. The third comprised Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula in Western India. The rulers of all these countries called themselves Satraps or Viceroys. Though it is impossible to say anything about the overlord whose Viceroys they were, and although there is scarcely any doubt that they were practically independent monarchs, the nomenclature has been accepted by modern historians, who style the Saka rulers of Mathura and Takshasila as Northern Satraps, and those of Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula as the Western Satraps. Altogether four Northern Satraps are known to us, though we hardly possess any detailed information about them. The Western Satraps were more than twenty in number, and ruled for three centuries. Their history will be dealt with in the next section.

The Kushanas, the last but by no means of the least importance among these foreign invaders, belonged to a nomadic Turkish tribe, called the Yueh-chi, which originally settled in the Kan-su province in Northwestern China. Being driven by another nomadic tribe, called the Hiung-nu (Huns), about 65 B.C., they were forced to march westward, and fell upon the Sakas who occupied the territory to the north of the Jaxartes rivers. Hardly had they occupied the land of the Sakas, than they were once more defeated by their old enemy, the Huns, and forced to move towards the south. The migration of the Sakas in consequence of this event and their ultimate settlement in India have just been related. As mentioned above, the Yueh-chi drove away the Sakas, and occupied and settled in Bactria to the south of the Oxus. Here two important changes came over them. In the first place, they gave up their nomadic habit, and adopted a settled life. Secondly, the solidarity of the great Yueh-chi tribe was destroyed and five of its clans established five independent principalities in the conquered region.

More than a century passed away, and then the chief of the Kushanas, one of the five clans of the Yueh-chi, found means to bring the other four clans under his sway. Kozola Kadphises or Kadphises I, who accomplished this great task, and laid the foundation of the greatness of his clan, did not rest content by merely establishing a united Yueh-chi principality. He cast longing eyes towards India, and made preparations for conquering that land. As a preliminary measure, he had to fight with the Greeks and the Parthians, who were now in possession of the territories immediately south of the Hindu Kush. Throughout his long career he was engaged in this task, and ultimately

succeeded in finally extinguishing the Parthian and the Greek domination in the Northwestern frontier of India. A series of coins beautifully illustrate how the authority gradually passed from Hermaeus, the last Greek ruler of Kabul, to Kadphises I.

But although Kadphises I disposed of his enemies, *viz.* the Greeks and the Parthians, and occupied Kabul, he was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his labour. With the Indian empire almost within his grasp, he died, full of years and honours, at the age of eighty. But the task which he left unfinished was more than accomplished by his son and successor, Wema Kadphises or Kadphises II, who conquered India, probably as far as Benaras, if not further towards the east. He did not, however, rule his Indian dominions in person, but appointed military chiefs to govern them on his behalf. Thus was established a vast Kushana empire which included large tracts on both sides of the Hindu Kush mountains.

The next Kushana emperor, the famous Kanishka, is probably the most familiar figure in ancient India after Asoka. His memory has been fondly cherished by the Buddhists who looked upon him as one of their greatest patrons, and a number of traditions have gathered round his name. According to these he conquered the whole of Northern India including Kashmir and Magadha, and his power extended up to the borders of the desert of Gobi in Central Asia. He is further credited with success in wars against the Parthians and the Chinese, and also with the conquest of three rich provinces belonging to the latter, *viz.* Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. It is even alleged that hostages from a Chinese principality lived in his court. How far these traditions may be accepted as historical it is difficult to say, but there is scarcely any doubt that Kanishka's Indian dominions included Kashmir and Upper Sindh, and extended to Banaras in the east and the Vindhya to the south.

Unlike Wema Kadphises whose relationship with Kanishka is not yet known, Kanishka ruled his Indian territories in person and selected Purushapura as his capital. The great relic-tower which he erected there excited the wonder and admiration of all for hundreds of years, and its ruins have been discovered near Peshawar which represents that ancient capital city. This, along with the statue of Kanishka discovered in Mathura, have rendered this famous emperor of old quite familiar to us. Traditions affirm that two learned men lived in the court of

Kanishka, viz. Asvaghosha, the famous Buddhist scholar and poet, and Charaka, who is supposed to be the same as the great medical authority whose treatises still occupy the highest place of honour in the indigenous system of medical treatment.

Kanishka was followed by three kings Vasishka, Huvishka and Vasudeva. Very little is known about them beyond the fact that they were probably successful in keeping the empire intact. Kanishka founded an era which is believed by many to be the Saka era current today. This would place the accession of Kanishka in 78 A.D. But opinions widely differ on this point. Certain it is that the four kings ruled for about one hundred years after which the great empire of Kanishka passed away.

It is now generally recognised that the downfall of the Kushana Empire was mainly due to the invasion of the Sassanians who had overthrown the Arsacid dynasty and founded a powerful kingdom in Persia early in the third century A.D. The Sassanian king Shapur I (241-272 A.D.) is known to have made extensive conquests in Bactria and Afghanistan and subjugated the Kushanas. According to the latest theory on the subject, Shapur's invasion, sometime between 241 and 250 A.D., coincides more or less with the end of the reign of Vasudeva; and consequently the accession of Kanishka, one hundred years before this, falls about 142 A.D. But the overthrow of the Kushana empire did not mean an end of the Kushana power in India. Kushana kings, known in history as the Later Kushanas, and bearing names of Kanishka and Vasudeva; ruled in Kabul and a part of the Punjab valley for a long time. They were ousted by another branch of the same clan, known as the Kidara Kushanas, who ruled in the same region till the 4th century A.D.

### The Western Satraps

Reference has been made above to the Saka Satraps of governors ruling over Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula. Very little is known of Bhumaka, the earliest of them known to us, except that he belonged to the Kshaharata dynasty, and ruled over extensive territories including Malwa, Gujarat, Kathiawar, Peninsula, and probably also a part of Rajputana and Sindh. The next Satrap Nahapana, who assumed the title *rajan*, is a more distinguished figure. His known dates range between 119 and 125 A.D. and his coins and inscriptions leave no doubt

that he ruled as an independent king over a vast dominion which extended as far as Ajmer in the north and the Nasik and Poona Districts in the south. But his power was crushed by the Satavahana king Gautamiputra Satakarni, and the Satrapy passed into the hands of a new dynasty known as Kardamaka.

Chashtana, the founder of this dynasty, is undoubtedly to be identified with Tiastenes who is mentioned in Ptolemy's Geography (written about 140 A.D.) as having ruled with Oozene (Ujjayini) as his capital. Evidently he recovered from the Satavahanas at least some of the dominions of Nahapana north of the Narmada. But the struggle continued, and Chashtana's successor, his grandson, Rudradaman, is represented as the Lord of all the countries conquered by Gautamiputra Satakarni. He further claims to have twice defeated Satakarni lord of Dakshinapatha, though he did not destroy the latter on account of close relationship between the two. A somewhat damaged record refers to the daughter of a Mahakshatrapa, the first letter of whose name, *ru*, alone had been preserved, as the wife of Vasishtiputra Satakarni. It has been plausibly suggested that the Mahakshatrapa was no other than Rudradaman and his son-in-law was Pulumayi (or his brother according to some). The Lord of Dakshinapatha, defeated by Rudradaman, is generally taken to be Pulumayi himself, though some identify him with his father Gautamiputra.

In any case, there is no doubt that the Satavahanas were finally driven from Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar, and Rudradaman not only ruled over these but also over Kachchha (Cutch), Svabhra (Sabarmati valley), Maru (Marwar), Sindhu, and Sauvira (eastern part of Sindh), and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Yaudheyas before 150 A.D., the date of the Junagadh inscription, which supplied us the above account. This very important record also extols the manifold virtues of Rudradaman. He was, we are told, versed in grammar, polity, music, and logic, and was famous for his Sanskrit compositions in prose and poetry. Whatever, we might think of these, the fact remains, that the long Sanskrit inscription, which was engraved by his order in A.D. 150, is the first official record in that language with the probable exception of one or two short epigraphs, out of hundreds that have so far come to light. According to this record Rudradaman won the hands of several princesses in *svayamyara* ceremonies. Inter-marriage with Indian royal families seems to have been a deliberate policy pursued by the *Kardamakas* in order to be merged into Hindu society.

Rudradaman was succeeded by his son *Damajadasri* who was associated with the administration during his father's reign. It seems to have been a regular practice for the king, who assumed the title Mahakshatrapa, to appoint his son or brother as joint ruler under the title Kshatrapa, with the right even to issue coins. As a matter of fact, it is from the numerous dated coins issued by the Mahakshatrapas and Kshatrapas that we can trace, in an unbroken line, the genealogy of the Western Kshatrapas for more than 300 years with only occasional gaps here and there.

The death of Damajadasri was followed by a disastrous civil war between his son and brother in the last quarter of the second century A.D. which considerably weakened the power and prestige of the family. The Satavahana king conquered part of their dominions and a new ruler, *Isvaradatta* by name, generally regarded as an Abhira, issued coins in his own name with the title Mahakshatrapa. Although order was soon restored and the family ruled peacefully for sometime, troubles again arose about the second quarter of the third century A.D.

Of the Eight Collections, the last called *Purananuru*, is the best known, and contains the poems of one hundred and fifty poets including Kapilar, Avvai and Kovur-Kilar. Apart from literary merits these poems contain valuable data for the reconstruction of the social history of the Tamils.

*Tirukkural*, or *Kural*, of Tiruvalluvar is the best the minor didactic poems, and its teachings have been described as "an eternal inspiration and guide to the Tamilians." The text is divided in three parts dealing with the *Trivarga* or wellknown three objects of life viz. *dharma*, *artha* and *Kama*, devoting ten stanzas to each of the 133 topics bearing upon different aspects of human life.

Of the ten epics, seven alone are now available, and two of these, *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai* deservedly occupy a very high place in Tamil literature. These two have been compared to the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and supply very valuable data for reconstructing the history of the Tamils in the early centuries of the Christian era.

*Silappadikaram* literally means 'the story that centres round an anklet.' "The hero Kovalan, infatuated by a courtesan named Madavi (Madhavi), squanders his fortune, and then, being disillusioned, returns

to his chaste and faithful wife Kannaki. The two set out for Madura, where Kovalan wants to pursue a trade, and proposes to raise the necessary capital by selling a pair of anklets, the only remaining jewels of his wife. The State goldsmith of Madura, whom he approaches with one anklet for this purpose, had stolen a similar anklet of the queen, and now accuses Kovalan. Thereupon the distracted wife proves the innocence of her husband by breaking open the other anklet. The Pandya king dies of grief for the great act of injustice done by him but nemesis overtakes the city of Madura. Kannaki curses the city which is accordingly consumed by flames. She shortly joins her husband in heaven and is proclaimed the goddess of chastity."

Manimekhalai, which is a contemporary work, is really a sequel to the other epic. The heroine Manimekhalai, the daughter of Kovalan by Madhavi, gets her inspiration from Kannaki, and passing through vicissitudes of fortune adopts the life of a Buddhist nun.

### Art and Architecture

The enormous wealth of the country led to the development of art and architecture. The Gupta period, remarkable for the religious and intellectual renaissance, also witnessed brilliant developments in respect of all the three branches of fine art, viz. architecture, sculpture and painting.

Although the political supremacy of the Guptas ended about 550 A.D., the culture in general, and the type of art in particular, ushered in by them continued for a century or even a little more. Hence, the whole period between 300 to 600, or 650 A.D. may be said to constitute the Gupta Age.

### Architecture

The Gupta architecture continues the tradition of the old and at the same time marks the beginning of a new age. The *stupas* and the rock-cut caves (both *chaitya*-halls and *viharas*) continue the old forms, but possess striking novelty. The Dhamekh *stupa* at Sarnath, probably of the sixth century A.D., consisting of a circular stone drum with a cylindrical mass of brickworks above it, and rising to a height of 128 ft., shows the final form of evolution of this type of structure. The caves, notably those at Ajanta (Nos. XVI, XVII, XIX), while retaining the

essential features of old, strike an altogether new line by the great beauty of their pillars of varied design and the fine paintings with which the inner walls and ceiling are decorated. Another notable groups of rock-cut monasteries and *chaitya*-halls are those of Ellora.

The structural *chaitya*-halls and the Hindu temples with apsidal ends follow the old traditions. Small flat-roofed temples, sometimes surrounded by pillared halls, are characteristic of the early Gupta period, and the small but elegant temple at Sanchi furnishes a good example. But a few shrines, with a *sikhara* on the roof, usher in a new style in North India which later came to be adopted all over the country. Though these temples of the Gupta period were neither imposing in dimensions nor very beautiful in design, they mark the beginning of the temple architecture, properly so-called, in North India, which was destined to exercise profound influence even in far-off lands. Two best examples of this type are furnished by the brick temple at Bhitargaon and the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh.

## Sculpture

But it is in the domain of sculpture that the Gupta period witnessed the highest development of art in India. The figures of Buddha, found in large number at Sarnath and other places, show a fully evolved form which was regarded as the model for succeeding ages in and outside India. It was derived from the Mathura type and owes nothing to Greek or any other foreign influence. Indeed, the Gupta sculpture may be regarded as typically Indian and classic in every sense of the term. As a great art critic has observed the "Gupta art marks the zenith in a perfectly normal cycle of artistic evolution." The fine-image of Buddha at Sarnath exhibits at once the grace and refinement as well as delicacy and repose, and offers a unique combination of perfection in technique with the expression of the highest spiritual conception which makes it a masterpiece. This high quality generally marks also the figures of Brahmanical gods as illustrated by the images of Siva, Vishnu and others in the sculptured panels of the Deogarh temple. On the whole the evolution of the perfect-type of divinities may be said to be the chief glory of Gupta sculpture. These divine images not only possess beautiful figures, at once charming and dignified, but are also beaming with a radiant spiritual expression. These characteristics, to a more or less degree, are present in all the figure sculptures, both human and mythical.

The beauty and charm which distinguishes human figures is equally present in the terracottas and decorative sculptures which are at once vigorous and well-designed. The deeply carved scrolls, with rich foliage and diminutive human and animal figures, deserve the highest praise for their naturalism and beautiful execution.

The Gupta artists and craftsmen were no less capable in working metals. The famous iron pillar at Delhi, near the Qutub Minar, is a marvel of metallurgical skill. The art of casting copper statues on a large scale by the *cire perdue* process was practised with conspicuous success. A copper image of Buddha, about 80 feet high, was erected at Nalanda in Bihar at the close of the sixth century; and the fine Sultanganj Buddha, 7½ feet high, is still to be seen in the Museum at Birmingham.

In general, a sublime idealism combined with a highly developed sense of rhythm and beauty, characterises the Gupta sculptures, and there are vigour and refinement in their design and execution. The intellectual element dominates. Gupta art keeps under control the highly developed emotional display and the exuberance of decorative elements which characterise the art of succeeding ages.

### Painting

Literary evidence leaves no doubt that the art of painting was cultivated in India from very remote times, for decorative paintings in walls of houses and lifelike portraits are referred to in the canonical Pali texts as well as in the Epics. But the most ancient extant paintings in India do not go back more than a century or two before the Christian Era. These are painted frescoes in the Jogimara cave of the Ramgarh hill in the Surguja State, M.P. Traces of painting also exist in the Bedsa cave and probably belong to the 3rd century A.D.

But the best fresco painting in India is illustrated in the series of *Ajanta* caves constructed between the first and seventh century A.D. These caves are 29 in number, and even as late as 1879 A.D. traces of painting remained in sixteen caves. Much has disappeared since and what remains today is only a very small fragment of the pictures which originally adorned the walls and ceilings of the caves.

The bulk of the painting undoubtedly belongs to the period 400-640 A.D., and was mainly executed under the patronage of the



Vakataka and the Chalukya kings. Although the pictures are termed frescoes, the process is somewhat different from that which is understood by that term in European painting. In Ajanta the rock-walls of the caves were first covered by a mixture of clay, cowdung and pulverized traprock, and then a thin coating of fine white plaster was applied. The ground thus prepared was carefully smoothed and kept moistened, and this produced a surface on which the design was first sketched and then painted, the usual colours being white, red and brown in various shades, a dull green and blue.

The pictures depict figures of Buddha and various episodes of his present and past lives *i.e.* Jataka stories. Animal and vegetable world is drawn upon in profusion for ornamental decorations, and the designs are as varied and graceful as they are fanciful. As regards the technical skill and aesthetic value of these paintings the following observations of Griffiths, who spent 13 years in closely studying them, may be said to represent the general views.

‘In spite of’, he writes, ‘of its obvious limitations, I find the work so accomplished in execution, so consistent in convention, so vivacious and varied in design, and full of such evident delight in beautiful form and colour, that I cannot help ranking it with some of the early art which the world has agreed to praise in Italy....The Ajanta workmanship is admirable; long subtle curves are drawn with great precision in a line of unvarying thickness with one sweep of the brush; the touch is often bold and vigorous, the handling broad, and in some cases the *impasto* is as solid as in the best Pompeian work. The draperies, too, are thoroughly understood and though the folds may be somewhat conventionally drawn, they express most thoroughly the peculiarities of the Oriental treatment of unsewn cloth....For the purposes of art education no better examples could be placed before an Indian art-student than those to be found in the caves of Ajanta. Here we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and action, flowers which bloom, birds which soar, and beasts that spring, or fight, or patiently carry burdens; all are taken from Nature’s book—growing after her pattern, and in this respect differing entirely from Muhammedan art, which is unreal, unnatural, and therefore incapable of development.’

A Danish artist, who has published a valuable professional criticism of Ajanta paintings, declares that ‘they represent the climax

to which genuine Indian art has attained; and that 'everything in these pictures from the composition as a whole to the smallest pearl or flower testifies to depth of insight coupled with the greatest skill.'

Some fine specimens of Indian paintings adorned the caves at Bagh, a village in the Gwalior State, even as late as 19th century. But very little of them now remains. These paintings possessed the same high quality as those at Ajanta and probably belonged to the 6th or first half of the 7th century A.D.

## POST-GUPTA AGE

### *Architecture*

(a) *Rock-cut caves* : During the period of six hundred years that followed the Gupta age we find a remarkable development in architecture. As before we have only specimens of religious structure. The rock-cut caves now enter the final phase of development and are gradually replaced by structural buildings. Nevertheless we have a few fine examples such as the Brahmanical series (as distinguished from the earlier Buddhist ones) at Ellora, and the fine Brahmanical temples at Elephanta and Salsette islands (near Bombay), all excavated between the 7th and 9th century A.D. Somewhat earlier than these are : (1) a number of pillared halls, and (2) the seven monolithic temples popularly called *rathas* or *Pagodas* at Mamallapuram, 35 miles south of Madras, erected respectively by the Pallava kings Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman in the 7th century A.D. The *rathas* culminated in a complete reproduction of massive structural temple cut out of rock, of which the unique example, unrivalled anywhere else in the world, is furnished by the Kailasa temple at Ellora built by the Rashtrakuta king Krishna. An entire hill-side was cut off to the extent of 160 ft. by 280 ft., and was converted into a magnificent monolithic temple with spacious halls and finely carved pillars. Fergusson refers to it as "one of the most singular and interesting monuments of architectural art in India," and V. Smith calls it "the most extensive and sumptuous of the rock-cut shrines," and "the most marvellous architectural freak in India."

The Jaina caves at Ellora (800-950 A.D.) bring to an end, for all practical purposes, the rock-cut architecture of India, whose gradual evolution we can trace from the days of Asoka. They were gradually

superseded by the structural examples *i.e.* temples built by means of dressed stone masonry, which is undoubtedly the more normal and rational mode of construction, once the technique had sufficiently developed.

(b) *Structural Temples* : These structural temples may be broadly divided into two classes, according to the shape of the *sikhara i.e.*, the towering superstructure above the sanctum containing the image of the god. Those in North Indian temples look like a solid tower with-curvilinear vertical ribs, bulging in the middle and ending in a very narrow necking covered by a distinct ribbed piece of round stone known as *amalaka*. The *sikharas* in Southern India have the appearance of straight-lined pyramidal towers, made up of a series of gradually receding stories divided by horizontal bands, and ending in a dome, or occasionally, a barrel-roofed ridge. Both the North and South Indian *sikharas* are decorated with sculptures, which often, specially in the former, take the form of miniature reproduction of the *sikhara* itself. According to geographical distribution these two styles of architecture are known respectively as North Indian or Indo-Aryan and South Indian or Dravidian.

(c) *North Indian Style* : The large number of temples at Bhuvanesvar in Orissa illustrate the evolution of the North Indian style. The temples consisted mainly of two parts, the cella or sanctum (*garbhagriha*) roofed by the *sikhara* and a *mandapa* or porch in front covered by a low pyramidal roof. Of the numerous temples at Bhuvaneswar, the Muktesvara, Rajarani, and the Lingaraja (the Great Temple) with its *sikhara*, 160 ft. in height, are the three best specimens. The famous but dilapidated temple at Konarak is remarkable for its marvellous sculptures and the beautifully designed pyramidal roof of the porch, happily intact which has been praised as "the most perfectly proportioned structure." The temple of Jagannath at Puri is also another fine specimen. From the Orissa coast on the east to Kashmir on the west; the whole of North India was studded with temples of this style. An important group of them is found at Khajarah, the capital of the Chandellas, and they were built by the rulers of this dynasty between 900 and 1150 A.D. A beautiful variation of this style, found in Rajputana and Gujarat, "is characterized by a free use of columns, carved with all imaginable richness, strut brackets, and exquisite marble ceilings with cusped pendants." The two best specimens of this style

are those at Mt. Abu, built wholly of white marble in 1031 and 1230. "The beauty and delicacy of the carving and the richness of design" of these two temples surpass all description.

We get a vivid idea of the splendour and magnificence of these North Indian temples from the following account of the temples of Mathura by Al Utbi, Secretary of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.

"In the middle of the city there was a temple larger and finer than the rest, which can neither be described nor painted. The Sultan thus wrote respecting it : "If any should wish to construct a building equal to this, he should not be able to do it without expending an hundred thousand thousand red *dinars* and it would occupy two hundred years, even though the most experienced and able workmen were employed." Among the idols there were five made of red gold, each five yards high, fixed in the air without support. In the eyes of one of these idols there were two rubies of such value, that if any one were to sell such as are like them, he would obtain fifty thousand *dinars*. On another, there was a sapphire purer than water and more sparkling than crystal; the weight was four hundred and fifty *miskals*. The two feet of another idol weighed four thousand four hundred *miskals*, and the entire quantity of gold yielded by the bodies of these idols was ninety-eight thousand three hundred *miskals*. The idols of silver amounted to two hundred, but they could not be weighed without breaking them into pieces and putting them into scales. The Sultan gave orders that all temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire, and levelled with the ground."

(d) *South Indian Style* : The earliest examples of the Dravidian style are the rock-cut temple known as Dharmaraja-*ratha* at Mamallapuram and the structural temples at Kanchi, known as Kailasanatha and the Vaikuntha Perumal,—all built by the Pallava kings. The first is a monolithic structure which, alongwith six others on the same site, are known as the seven *rathas* or *Pagodas*, and show the ingenuity of the Pallava artists.

The Cholas, who succeeded the Pallavas as the dominant political power in the south, were mighty builders. They built, among others, two magnificent temples at Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram in the Trichinopoly District. The great Siva temple at Tanjore is 'the largest, highest and the most ambitious' religious structure in India.

The temple is 180 feet long; the base of the sanctum is 82 ft. square and two stories in height; above this rises, in 13 stories, the massive pyramidal tower 190 ft. high. While every inch of this vast exterior was richly carved with sculptures, the interior walls of the cella were decorated with fine paintings.

(e) *Temple in the Deccan* : The Deccan plateau had at first no independent style of its own, and we find temples both of North and South Indian style at Ailhole, Badami and Pattadakal. From after 1000 A.D., however, we find some notable changes gradually leading to the evolution of a distinct style, which some regard as intermediate in type between North and South Indian styles, and others, merely as a variation of the latter with hardly any influence of the former. The low pyramidal *sikhara* of these temples, however, undoubtedly has the appearance of a blending of the northern and southern types, and in height and composition may be regarded as intermediate between the two. The influence of the North Indian style is clearly emphasised by the introduction of miniature North Indian *sikhara* as a decorative element. There is, however, no doubt that the influence of the South Indian style is more marked.

Most of the temples of this type were built by or during the reigns of the Later Chalukya and Hoysala kings. Hence, the new style is often called after these royal dynasties, Chalukya, Hoysala or Chalukya-Hoysala. Apart from the shape of the *sikhara*, these temples, which are mostly found in modern Mysore, are characterised by a richly carved base or plinth, supporting a polygonal or star-shaped temple. The wealth and variety of sculptures on the base is unrivalled in any buildings, ancient or modern and the Hoysala temples are appropriately referred to "as one of the most marvellous exhibitions of human labour to be found even in the patient east."

The Hoysalesvara temple at Dorasamudra is the best example of this style. It really consists of two temples built side by side and connected by the adjacent transepts. Each of these is 112 ft. long and 100 ft. wide, and cruciform in plan, so that its exterior shows a large number of projections and angular surfaces. The two structures with their *nandi* pavilions rest on a platform having angles corresponding to those of the main buildings. Its entire external elevation of 25 ft. is covered by a continuous series of mouldings of animal figures and floral scrolls which are carried round the whole building covering a length

of about 710 ft. The figures of elephants, which cover the lowest frieze and are minutely carved with rider and trappings, are about two thousand in number. More than ten such carved friezes decorate the lower part above which begin the big sculptured figures on the walls. It has been rightly remarked by a great art critic that "this temple, chiefly on account of the emphatic prodigality of its sculptural embellishment, is, without exaggeration, one of the most remarkable monuments ever produced by the hand of man."

### Sculpture

In striking contrast with architecture, the art of sculpture suffered a great decline during the post-Gupta age. The main reason seems to be the undue weight of religious conventions, for the artists had to follow scrupulously the descriptions of the deities in religious texts without any regard to *aesthetic* considerations. The result was generally a grotesque, and at best a dull lifeless conventional, figure which hardly made any aesthetic appeal. Nevertheless, numerous specimens all over India show that the sculptors still possessed high technical skill and sometimes even produced works distinguished alike by charm and elegance. The sculptures of Eastern India during the Pala period form a class by themselves and show a fair degree of excellence. The figures as well as decorative sculptures of Orissa often reached a high standard of excellence. The earlier Chola sculptures also maintain a very high level, and some of the bronze figures of Nataraja from South India have elicited high admiration of art critics. In the Deccan some of the sculptures of the Kailasa temple, Ellora, and the reliefs of Elephanta cave (8th century A.D.) may be regarded as finest examples of sculpture of this age.

### Painting

The ceilings of the rock-cut temple at Kailasa and the adjoining caves (Indrasabha, Lankesvara and Ganesa Lena) contain paintings of a type and style different from those of Ajanta and Bagh. The walls were also probably painted, but only a few traces have been preserved. Most of these paintings, are coeval with the temple itself and thus belong to the 8th century A.D.

The cave temple Sittannavasal in Pudukottai (Madras) contains some fine paintings of the time of the Pallava king Mahendravarman.

They are elegant and beautiful, and show the degree of excellence which the art had attained during the Pallava rule.

Chola paintings of the 11th century A.D. have been found in the Great Temple at Tanjore. These were overlaid with later paintings and have only recently been exposed. Their high quality recalls those of Ajanta and offer a striking contrast to the later paintings which covered them so long.

The art of painting in later periods is mostly known from illuminations on palm-leaves of manuscripts found in Eastern India and Gujarat. But although they are basically related to those of Ajanta, they are much inferior. Although some of the paintings in the manuscripts of the Pala period are of good quality, they cannot be compared with the earlier paintings, specially those at Ajanta, Bagh and Sittannavasal in respect of colour, expression, or drawing of line. In these elements which constitute the essence of the art, the specimens of the earlier age up to the 7th century A.D. represent the high watermark of the art of painting in India.

Krishna III, and is famous for his two works, the *Adipurana*, dealing with the life of the first Jaina *Tirthamkara* and the *Pampa-Bharata* with Arjuna as its hero.

Among later writers may be mentioned Durgasimha the author of a Champu work *Panchatantra* based on the *Brihatkatha*, and Nagachandra who wrote a Champu on the story of Rama, giving it a completely Jaina garb.

The Kannada literature is very rich in works based on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas, the Jaina traditions, as well as romantic stories and poems based on Sanskrit models.

Like the Jainas the Virasaivas contributed a great deal to the development of Kannada literature. The prose literature introduced by them and known as Vachana constitutes a landmark in Kannada literature and enjoys great popularity among the masses even today. More than two hundred writers, including some women, are said to have contributed to the growth and development of this literary form, simple in style and easily understood by the common people.

Like the Saiva and the Jaina there were also Vaishnava works of repute. One of the earliest was Rudra Bhatta's *Jagannatha-vijaya*, a Champu based on the legends of Krishna.

## Telugu

The Telugu-literature proper may be said to have begun with the translation of the Adi and Sabha parvas of the *Mahabharata* by Nannaya in the eleventh century A.D. Tikkana (1220-1300), the greatest among the Telugu poets, took up the translation from Virata-parva to the end. The intervening Vana-parva was translated by Yerrapragada (1280-1350). These three poets (*kavitraya*) occupy a very high position in Telugu literature.

There were two Telugu translations of the *Ramayana*, one by Kona Buddharaja in the thirteenth, and the other by Hullakki Bhaskara in the fourteenth century.

Many other works in Sanskrit were translated into Telugu, including *Dasakumara-charita* of Dandin, two treatises on Mathematics, and Vijnanesvara's *Mitakshara*. There were also books on grammar and politics as well as Puranas based on Sanskrit models.

## The System of Education

The extensive literature described above is the visible product of a rational system of education which had no parallel in the history of the ancient world. The importance of education was realised in India from very early times, and utmost emphasis was laid upon the acquisition of knowledge. The educational institutions were many and varied in character. In its simplest form it was the gathering of one or more students in the house of a teacher. The students were brought up as members of the household and they looked upon the teacher and his wife as their father and mother. As regards tuition fees, the practice varied. In some cases no fee was taken except something voluntarily given at the end. In other cases, the sons of rich men paid a lump sum to teachers as honorarium at the commencement of their study, while the poor students performed menial services in the teacher's house in lieu of paying fees.

The object of this system of education was threefold: the acquisition of knowledge, the inculcation of social duties and religious rites, and, above all, the formation of character. All the three aims were kept distinctly in the forefront, but the greatest emphasis was laid upon the last. Even the greatest champion of Brahmanism boldly laid down that "neither the study of the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor



any self-imposed restraint, nor austerities-ever procure the attainment of rewards to a man whose heart is contaminated by sensuality." And the control of passions must be of a thorough-going character, for "when one among all the organs slips away (from control), thereby (man's) wisdom slips away from him, even as the water (flows) through the one (open) foot of a (water-carrier's) skin." In order to achieve this high ideal of perfect mastery over senses, a life of strict discipline was prescribed for the student. He had to shun sensual pleasures of all kinds, and lead a simple austere life. He was inspired by the high ideals of the teacher with whom he lived in close and intimate contact, and imbibed social and moral virtues by his precept and example. At the same time the tender side of his nature was nourished, and domestic virtues developed by the sweet and affectionate relationship with the wife and sons of the teacher.

The subjects of instruction were fairly comprehensive, and included not only literature, both sacred and secular, with its accessories, Grammar, Metrics, Poetics, Logic and Philosophy, but also technical and Scientific literature such as Medicine, Military Science, Astronomy, Astrology Mathematics, Politics, Economics, as well as divination, magic and mechanical arts of all descriptions. The practical character of the teaching in science is well illustrated by the story of Jivaka. After he had studied medical science at Takshasila for seven years, his teacher adopted the following device in order to put his knowledge to the test. "Take this spade," said he, "and seek round about Takshasila a *yojana* on ever side, and whatever plant you see which is not medicinal, bring it to me." Jivaka accordingly walked round the city with a spade in hand but did not see anything that was not medicinal. When he reported this to his teacher, the latter was satisfied about his pupil's learning and permitted him to go home.

Takshasila (Taxila) was the most famous seat of learning in ancient India till the rise of Nalanda in the fifth century A.D. It had many famous teachers, and attracted students not only from all parts of India but also from other parts of the world.

There were other cities besides Takshasila which grew to be important seats of learning. Sometimes hundreds of students gathered round a teacher in these cities and were maintained at public expense. In some cases, the teacher found the surroundings of the city life to be hindrances to proper education of his students, and retired to a solitary

place. There the teacher lived in humble huts with his students, and maintained a precarious living with the assistance of their kinsfolk. As soon, however, as the reputation of the teacher spread abroad, the public help placed them above all wants. From these humble beginnings arose important institutions like the University of Nalanda, the crest-jewel of the educational institutions in the whole of Asia.

It is difficult for us to realise at this distance of time the position and achievements of this famous university of old. Advanced students from different parts of Asia flocked to it in order to complete their education, and nobody without a Degree of Nalanda was thought much of in the educated world.

The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang studied at Nalanda for several years and has left a short but impressive accounts of its magnificence. 'There were thousands of similar institutions in India,' says he, 'but none comparable to Nalanda in grandeur. There were 10,000 students who studied not only the Buddhist literature in all its branches, but even other works such as the Vedas (including Atharvaveda), Logic, Grammar, Medicine, Sankhya Philosophy, etc. and discourses were given from 100 pulpits everyday. Piety of generations of kings not only adorned the place with magnificent buildings, both residential and lecture halls, but supplied all the material necessities of this vast conscourse of the teachers and the taught. The revenues of about 100 villages were remitted for this purpose, and two hundred householders in these villages supplied in turn the daily needs of the inmates.' The Chinese pilgrim aptly remarks : "Hence the students here, being so abundantly supplied, do not require to ask for the four requisites, clothes, food, bedding and medicine. This is the source of the perfection of their studies, to which they have arrived."

Hiuen Tsang was impressed by the atmosphere of learning that prevailed at Nalanda. "The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion; the old and the young mutually help one another."

Nalanda was meant for advanced students only, and the candidates for admission had to pass a severe preliminary test. Hiuen Tsang says that the teachers and students were men of the highest ability and talent, and their fame rapidly spread through distant regions. Learned men from different cities came in large number to settle their doubts, and the students of Nalanda were sure of honour and renown,

wherever, they went. In a word, the University of Nalanda was the embodiment of the highest ideal of education, and it was the visible monument of the role which India played as the teacher of Asia.

Nalanda continued as an important centre of learning down to the latest days of Hindu independence. Throughout this period famous universities like Vikramasila and thousands of educational institutions, both great and small, flourished all over India and imparted education in all branches of study. These were maintained, sometimes by pious donations, and sometimes at public expense, for the Indians never hesitated to loosen their purse strings for purposes of education. The type of men turned out by these educational institutions may be best described in the words of Hiuen Tsang. 'When they have finished their education and have attained thirty years of age, then their character is formed and their knowledge ripe.' There are some deeply versed in antiquity, who devote themselves to elegant studies and live apart from the world, and retain the simplicity of their character. These rise above mundane presents and are as insensible to renown as to the contempt of the world. Their name having spread a far, the rulers appreciate them highly, but are unable to draw them to the court. The chief of the country honours them on account of their (mental) gifts, and the people exalt their fame and render them universal homage. Forgetting fatigue they expatiate in the arts and sciences; seeking for wisdom while "relying on perfect virtue" they count not 150 miles a long journey. Though their family be in affluent circumstances, such men make up their mind to be like the vagrants and get their food by begging as they go about. With them there is honour in knowing truth and there is no disgrace in being destitute.

It is not every age, it is not every nation, that can boast of the type of men described by Hiuen Tsang. But the effect of the wonderful system of education was also seen in the high level of average men in ancient India. The most unimpeachable testimony on this point is furnished by the foreign travellers who visited India from time to time. We have already quoted the observations of Megasthenes, the Greek statesman who visited India in the 3rd century B.C. Let us now turn to the account of a Chinese scholar in the 7th century A.D. Hiuen Tsang tells us : "The Kshatriyas and Brahmans are clean-handed and unostentatious, pure and simple in life and very frugal. They are pure of themselves and not from compulsion. With respect to the ordinary

people, although they are naturally light-minded, yet they are upright and honourable. In money matters they are without craft, and in administering justice they are considerate. They are not deceitful or treacherous in their conduct, and are faithful to their oaths and promises. In their rules of government there is remarkable rectitude, whilst in their behaviour there is much gentleness and sweetness." Thus, according to the standards both the East as well as of the West, Indian character was high and honourable. This was undoubtedly the result of the grand system of education which they had evolved—a system which produced the most comprehensive literature and the best type of men.

## ECONOMIC CONDITION

### Trade and Commerce

During the period under review trade and commerce was in a flourishing condition. Not only was there a coasting trade between different parts of India, but a regular mercantile traffic was carried on between India on the one hand and the Eastern and Western countries on the other. Ships plied between ports on the Bay of Bengal and those in Further India, islands in the Indian Archipelago and China. Tamralipti, represented by modern Tamluk in Bengal, was a famous port, and we read of many voyages to it from the Chinese ports. The people of Kalinga and the Tamil states had also a great share in this traffic, and there was regular commercial intercourse between the eastern coast of India and the Indian colonies beyond the sea. Similarly, there was a brisk trade between the western coast of India and the western countries such as Western Asia, Africa and Europe. Fa-Hien, who came to this country in the 5th century A.D., sailed from Tamralipti of Java via Ceylon, and again from Java to China in Indian merchantment. Hiuen Tsang also refers to both inland and foreign trade of India. Referring to Surashtra he says, "the men all derived their livelihood from the sea and engage in commerce and exchange of commodities." Of the people of another kingdom in the west he says, "commerce is their principal occupation." From ninth century A.D. we get accounts of Indian trade from the Arab writers, for at this period the Arabs took a leading part in the trade of the Western World. Indian inscriptions also refer to the activities of merchants. Numerous clay-seals, discovered in the ruins of the ancient city of Vaisali, bear the

names of a large number of traders, bankers and merchants, and refer to their corporate organisation. Dr. Bloch, who discovered them, concludes that "something like a modern Chamber of Commerce existed in Northern India, at some big trading centre, perhaps at Pataliputra." Similarly, the merchants of Southern India were also distinguished for their corporate organisations. We read of "organisation of 505 merchants," and "an assembly of merchants from 18 subdivisions of 79 districts meeting together in a conference." The Bananja community had a most powerful organisation embracing merchants of different classes from distant parts of India. They are frequently referred to, and sometimes highly praised, in contemporary records. We learn from one of them "that they were brave men born to wander over many countries, penetrating regions of the six continents by land and water routes, and dealing in various articles such as horses, elephants, precious stones, perfumes and drugs, either wholesale or in retail." Some of these trade-corporations enjoyed large prerogatives and political rights.

### Wealth and Prosperity

The highly flourishing trade and commerce made the country enormously wealthy, and the reputations of the riches of India spread far and wide. Hiuen Tsang says with regard to Valabhi that "there are some hundred houses (families) or so who possess a hundred *lakhs*. The rare and valuable products of distant regions are here stored in great quantities." Similar accounts of the enormous wealth of India are given by the Muhammedan writers. "The immense wealth," "plenty of gold" etc. of India are referred to in general terms by the Arab travellers of the ninth and following centuries. Again, the Arab historians refer to the enormous quantity of wealth plundered by the Muhammedan conquerors from India. Thus, we are told that after the fall of Multan, Muhammad Ibn Qasim obtained a treasure amounting of thirteen thousand and two hundred *mans* weight of gold in one temple alone. Again, when Sultan Mahmud conquered Bhim-Nagar (Kangra), a contemporary writer records that the "treasures and precious jewels accumulated in it had attained such an amount that the backs of camels would not carry it, nor vessels contain it, nor writer's hands record it, nor the imagination of an arithmetician conceive it." Coming to details he says : "The treasures were laden on the backs of as many camels as they could procure and the officers

carried away the rest. The stamped coins amounted to seventy thousand thousand royal *dirhams*, and the gold and silver ingots amounted to seven hundred thousand four hundred *mans* in weight." The Sultan on reaching Ghazni spread his booty on a carpet in the courtyard of his palace, and the foreign ambassadors assembled to see the wealth which they had never yet even read of in books of the ancients, and which had never been accumulated by kings of Persia or of Rum, or even by Karun who had only to express a wish and God granted it. Such is the description of the wealth of a single temple which was by no means the richest in India, for the same writer says with regard to the riches plundered at Thaneshwar that "it is impossible to recount them." Similar stories of riches untold are narrated with regard to the sack of other cities. By the treaty between Alauddin Khilji and the Yadava king of Devagiri, the latter paid, among other things, "600 *maunds* of pearls, two of jewels and 1000 of silver." These accounts may be exaggerated to some extent, but they suffice to give a general idea of the immense riches of the country.

## 5

# Invasion of Alexander

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The western borderland of India comprising the Punjab, Sindh and Afghanistan seems to have been lacking in political power and prestige during this period. Of the sixteen traditional states mentioned in Indian literature, only two, Kamboja and Gandhara, may be placed in this outlying region. It appears to have been divided into two dozen or more independent principalities, some of which were ruled by kings, while others had democratic or oligarchic constitution. They were not infrequently at war with one another, and thus offered an easy prey to foreign invaders.

The powerful Achaemenian Emperors of Persia naturally cast their longing eyes towards this region, and it is probable that Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) subjugated a number of tribes living to the south of the Hindu Kush mountains. It was not, however, till the reign of Darius (522-486 B.C.) that we have positive evidence of the extension of Achaemenian rule in India proper. Two later inscriptions of this monarch dated between 518 and 515 B.C., but not an earlier one dated two years before, mention Hi(n)du as a part of his dominion. The exact connotation of this term is not known, but it certainly comprised some territory to the east of the Sindhu, which Darius must have conquered about 518 B.C. Herodotus, the Greek historian, tells us that in 517 B.C. Darius sent a naval expedition under Scylax to explore the valley of the Sindhu river. We further learn from the same source that the Indian dominion formed the twentieth Satrapy of the empire of Darius, but contributed a third of its entire revenue in gold dust which amounted to over a million pounds sterling.

How long the Persian domination lasted in India is not definitely known. Its continuance up to about 330 B.C. is generally presumed

on the ground that the Indian soldiers formed part of the Achaemenian army that conquered Greece in the time of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) and fought against Alexander at Gaugamela in 330 B.C. But this is by no means a sure conclusion, as the Indians might have joined the army as mercenary soliders. This seems to be the more probable, as on the later occasion the Indian contingents are expressly mentioned as having fought under Satraps of other provinces. This shows that there were perhaps no Persian Satraps in India at that time.

Th defeat of the Achaemenian king Darius III at Gaugamela in the hands of Alexander profoundly affected the course of Indian history. Alexander pursued the fugitive king and overran the whole of Persian dominions in the east as far as the Jaxartes. He then returned, re-crossed the Hindu Kush, and advanced against India in May, 327 B.C. The king of Takshasila (Taxila, near Rawalpindi in the Punjab) offered to help Alexander, and thus followed in the footsteps of those Greek princelings and statesmen who, in the preceding century, joined the Achaemenian Emperors and betrayed the interests of Hellas in order to secure personal gain or safety. But though one or two Indian princes followed the ignoble example of Taxila, most of the numerous kings and republican or oligarchic tribes in Afghanistan, Panjab and Sindh opposed a brave resistance, though in vain. These petty chieftains and tribes were, of course, no match for the seasoned troops Alexander. But though they knew they had no chance of success they refused to submit without a fight. The Greek writers have paid well-deserved tribute to the bravery and patriotism of a large number of them, though their own countrymen have kept no record of their heroic deeds and their very names have been forgotten. Alexander's triumphant march over the dead bodies of thousands of such heroes and patriots is no doubt a brilliant episode in the history of Greece, but indirectly it also sheds lustre on India for the fearlessness of death and the love of freedom shown by her sons. Among those who acquired undying fame by their heroic conduct only a few may be mentioned here, but the Greek annals are full of them.

Alexander sent a part of his army along the Kabul river under two of his best generals. They were opposed by the chief of Pushkalavati (Charsadda near Peshawar) who defended his capital for thirty days till he fell fighting. Alexander himself led the other division of the army in the valleys of the Kumar, Panjkora and Swat rivers in order to secure his flank. He was opposed by the hilly tribes whom the Greeks



called Aspasioi and Assakenoi, probably a corruption of Asvakas. They held out in their citadels and offered stubborn resistance. While attacking one of these, Alexander himself received a wound, and in retaliation he put the whole population to the sword. When the king of the Assakenoi fell fighting his army was led by the queen, whose example induced the entire womanhood of the locality to join this struggle for freedom. After a brave resistance for several days Massaga, the capital city, capitulated. A body of mercenary troops, 7000 in number, who had distinguished themselves in the fight, were granted their lives by a special agreement which Alexander concluded with them, but at night they were surrounded and butchered to a man. This massacre has been condemned even by the Greek writers. The capture of Aornus, the strongest citadel of the Assakenoi, is described by the Greek writers at great length, and is regarded by them almost as the greatest military feat of Alexander in his Indian campaign.

Having thus subdued the Assakenoi and some other tribes, Alexander joined his other division which had in the meanwhile reached the Sindhu and built a bridge of boats of Ohind, 16 miles above Attock. Alexander crossed with his whole army and halted at Taxila. He then invited the neighbouring chiefs to come and offer submission. The most powerful among them was the ruler of a kingdom between the Jhelum and the Chenab whom the Greeks call Porus, probably a corruption of Paurava. When he was summoned by Alexander's envoys to meet the great Emperor he proudly replied that he would undoubtedly do so, but at his own frontiers and in arms. Alexander made elaborate preparations to fight against him and the way in which the Greek writers describe the campaign shows that it taxed the resources and ingenuity of Alexander to the utmost. Yet it must be remembered that Porus was a ruler of a small territory, perhaps not bigger than a modern district in the Punjab. Porus fought bravely, and with nine wounds on his body, was led a captive before Alexander. The latter asked him how he should like to be treated. "Like a king" came the proud and prompt reply. Alexander secured the alliance of this brave chief by restoring his kingdom and adding to it the territories of "15 republican tribes with their 5000 cities and villages without number," and the kingdom of Porus II between the Chenab and the Ravi, all of which he conquered later. In course of his advance to the next river Beas he had to fight hard with the Kathaioi (Kathas?) whose casualties amounted to 17,000 killed and 70,000 captured.

Alexander's advance was arrested on the bank of the Beas, for his soliders mutinied and refused to proceed further (end of July 326 B.C.). Whether this insubordination of the soliders was due merely to war-weariness, as represented by the Greek writers or at least partly to the feat inspired by the mighty empire of the Nandas which lay beyond the river, it is difficult to say. It is interesting to note, however, that in course of their reply to Alexander's arguments the troops laid great stress on the calamity that would befall the whole army if Alexander met with accident in course of the campaign.

Whatever, may be the real reason, Alexander had to bow to the decision of his mutinous soliders. He went back along the road by which he came till he reached the Jhelum river. Then he sailed down the river with a part of his army in 1000 boats, while troops marched along its either bank to protect him. Near the confluence of this river with the Chenab he had to fight with a confederacy of republican tribes led by the Malloi (Malavas) and the Oxydrakai (Kshudrakas). All the towns of the Malavas became citadels of resistance. In one of them the Brahmanas, 5000 in number, left the pen for the sword and died fighting, only a few being taken prisoners. While taking another town by assault Alexander was severely wounded, and when it was captured, his infuriated soliders killed everybody they found within irrespective of age and sex. Another tribe, the Agalassoi (Arjunayanas?) also fought with great valour, and when one of their towns was captured by Alexander all the citizens, numbering 20,000, after a heroic resistance, threw themselves into the fire with their wives and children. This is the first recorded *Jauhar* ceremony in Indian history—the precursor of many terrible repetitions in later days.

When two kings, Musicanus (king of the Mushikas?) and Oxycanus, in the lower Sindhu valley, submitted to Alexander, they were denounced as traitors by the Brahmanas who urged the people to oppose foreign invaders as part of the *dharma* (religion). The king revoked their submission and fought, but were put to the sword alongwith the Brahmanas. In September 325 B.C., Alexander reached Patala, where the Sindhu was divided into two branches before reaching the sea, and began his homeward journey. He proceeded with his army by land, but sent the ships under Nearchus with instructions to bring them along the coast into the Persian Gulf as far as the mouth of the Eupharates. Alexander reached Susa in Persia in 324 B.C. and died

there the next year. He had made arrangements for the administration of the conquered territories and put several Satraps incharge of different parts. But some conquered tribes rebelled and there were other troubles even before he left India. After his death the whole system collapsed within a short-time.

The invasion of Alexander The Great has been recorded in minute details by the Greek historians who naturally felt elated at the triumphant progress of their hero over unknown lands and seas. From the Indian point of view, its importance lies in the fact that it opened up a free intercourse between India and the western countries which was big with future consequences. For the rest there was nothing to distinguish his raid in Indian history. It can hardly be called a great military success as the only military achievements to his credit were the conquest of petty tribes and states by instalments. He never approached even within a measurable distance of what may be called the citadel of Indian military strength, and the exertions he had to make against Porus, the ruler of a small district between the Jhelum and the Chenab, do not certainly favour the hypothesis that he would have found it an easy task to subdue the mighty Nanda empire. Taking everything into consideration, a modern historian, unprejudiced by the halo of Greek name, may perhaps be excused for the belief, that the majority of Greek writers did not tell the whole truth when they represented the retreat of Alexander as solely due to the unwillingness of his soldiers to proceed any further; nor can he dismiss, as altogether fictitious, the view recorded by more than one ancient Greek historian, that the retreat of Alexander was caused by the terror of the mighty power of the Nandas.

But if the invasion of Alexander was not crowned by military success like that of Nadir Shah or Tamerlane, it was nevertheless characterised by cruelties, which may differ in degree, but certainly not in kind, from those standing to the credit of that later heroes. The perfidious massacre of the garrison of Massage and the recorded instances of the blood-thirsty Greek troop slaughtering the inhabitants of captured cities, sparing neither man, woman nor child, tell their own tale. The Greek historians have recorded that during the campaign of the lower Sindh valley alone, 80,000 of the natives were killed, and multitude sold as slaves; and howsoever the modern European historian may try to palliate or justify these crimes, an Indian historian can hardly

be blamed for regarding Alexander only as a precursor of Nadir Shah and Tamerlane.

The death of Alexander was a signal for the disruption of a vast empire. The Indian territories, which cost him a toilsome and cruel warfare for about three years, declared their independence, and in less than five years they did away with the vestige of Greek domination in the Punjab.

## APPENDIX

### The Chronological Problem

We have no definite data for fixing the chronology of the period before Alexander's invasion. According to the unanimous tradition of the Buddhists, the Buddha died in the 8th year of the reign of Ajatasatru, and the chronology of the whole period is usually fixed with the help of this synchronism. Unfortunately, the date of the death of Buddha is not known with certainty. According to the tradition current in Ceylon, the event took place in 544 B.C. But this date is incompatible with the statement in the Ceylonese Chronicles that Asoka's coronation took place 218 years after the death of Buddha. For the evidence of the Greek writers, and the known dates of the Greek kings mentioned in Asoka's inscriptions as his contemporaries, leave no doubt that Asoka's consecration took place within a few years of 269 B.C. Accordingly some scholars place the date of the death of Buddha in c. 487 (269+218) B.C. This view is supported by what is known as the dotted "record". It is said that a dot was put in a record each year after the death of Buddha, and this practice was continued in Canton up to the year 489 A.D. As the total number of dots in that year was 975 we get 486 B.C. as the date of the death of Buddha. This date has been accepted in this work and the chronology arranged accordingly, though the date of the death of Buddha still remains a vexed problem.

Once the date of Ajatasatru's accession is fixed with reference to the date of the death of Buddha, we can determine approximately the dates of the kings who preceded and succeeded him by counting backwards and forwards with the help of their reign-periods stated in the Puranas and Ceylonese Chronicles. In this way we can approximately fix the chronology of the period going as far back as the Great War.

The known date of Alexander's invasion gives us the first fixed point in Indian chronology, and enables us to determine the date of Chandragupta Maurya. The dates of most other kings that succeeded him, with the exception of the Kushana king Kanishka, are now known with a tolerable degree of certainty.

## 6

# The Gupta Empire

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After the downfall of the Kushanas and the Andhras no great political power arose in India for sometime. As we have seen above, for about a century India was divided into a large number of independent states whose varying fortunes and mutual struggles are the chief features of the history of this period. There were kingdoms as well as non-monarchical states, and on the whole the political situation was not unlike that at the beginning of the sixth century B.C.

About the beginning of the fourth century A.D., a chief called Sri Gupta, or Gupta, ruled over a petty kingdom in Magadha, which probably also comprised a portion of Bengal. He was succeeded by his son Ghatotkacha. Neither the father nor the son seems to have possessed any considerable power. But with Chandragupta, the son of Ghatotkacha, began a new epoch in the history of the family.

An era beginning in 320 A.D., and known as the Gupta era, is generally believed to have started from the accession of Chandragupta. Chandragupta is also styled *Maharajadhiraja* in striking contrast to the title *Maharaja* of his two predecessors. These facts indicate that he raised the small principality to the status of an important kingdom by extending its boundaries in all directions. The means by which he accomplished this are not definitely known. He married a princess of the Lichchhavi family named Kumaradevi and had her portrait engraved on his coins together with his own. His son and successor, the great emperor Samudragupta, took pride on his descent, on the mother's side, from the Lichchhavis. These facts give rise to a natural presumption that the matrimonial connection with the Lichchhavis materially contributed to the political greatness of the Guptas. This is,

however, a mere conjecture for which definite proof is yet lacking. For it is just possible that the Guptas acquired great social prestige by matrimonial relation with an ancient Kshatriya clan like the Lichchhavis, and naturally proclaimed this fact in all possible ways.

The exact boundaries of Chandragupta's kingdom are unknown but it probably extended to the west as far as Allahabad. He died about 340 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Samudragupta.

Samudragupta is one of the greatest military genius that India ever produced. His whole reign was a vast military campaign. He was an embodiment of the political principles preached by Kautilya *viz.* "Whoever is superior in power shall wage a war," "Whoever possessed of necessary means shall march against his enemy." He first of all waged a ruthless war of extermination against his neighbouring kings in Northern India. He seems to have advanced as far as the Chambal and within this area, all the kings were killed, and their kingdoms incorporated into the growing Gupta empire. It was unnecessary for the valiant emperor to proceed further, either towards the east or towards the west, for the eastern kingdoms like Bengal, Assam and Nepal, the western non-monarchical tribal states like those of the Malavas, Yaudheyas, Arjunayanas, Madras and Abhiras in the Punjab and Rajputana, and a host of minor ones in Malwa and Madhya Pradesh proffered submission of their own accord, and agreed to pay homage and taxes to the Gupta Emperor. Indeed, the terror of the Gupta arms was such that even the distant Kushana kings of Afghanistan and the Saka Satraps of Gujarat sought the favour of Samudragupta.

But the most difficult undertaking of the Gupta Emperor was unquestionably the great military expedition to the south along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. Passing through the forest tracts of Madhya Pradesh, he proceeded to the Orissan coast, and then marching through Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Godavari, Krishana and Nellore districts, his victorious army reached as far as the famous Pallava kingdom of Kanchi, now represented by Conjeevaram, south-west of Madras. The march along the coast suggests a joint operation by the navy. Although there is no definite proof of this, we know that many islands in the Indian Ocean were either conquered by the great Gupta monarch or submitted to him out of fear, thus clearly indicating his possession of a powerful navy.

The southern expedition of Samudragupta, though highly successful from a military point of view, did not lead to any permanent conquest. More than twelve kings were defeated in battle and taken prisoners, but as Samudragupta could not hope to rule over their dominions permanently, he took the prudent course of re-instating them, probably as tributary kings. It reflects great credit on the political sagacity of Samudragupta that he knew the limitation of his power and capacity. He was content with direct rule over a consolidated dominion in Northern India, and an acknowledgment of supremacy from the rest. Had he essayed the almost impossible task of ruling the whole of India, like Asoka, the Gupta empire would probably have met with an early end like its predecessor. But it is chiefly due to the statemanship of Samudragupta that the vast empire which he left behind was gradually extended and gloriously maintained by his successors for nearly a hundred years more.

The empire consisted of four categories of territory. The first, which formed its core, was directly administered by the Emperor with the help of viceroys and other officials. It was roughly bounded by the Himalayas on the north, the Yamuna and the Chambal on the west, the Brahmaputra on the east, and an irregular line running through Bhilsa and Jubbulpore on the south. To the east and the west of this lay the tributary states, monarchical and republican mentioned above, which formed the second category. Further beyond lay the dominions of the Sakas and the Kushanas also were independent in name, but thought it politic to be submissive to the great Gupta emperor. This, the third category, might be classed as states in subordinate alliance. The fourth category consisted of the twelve states in the Deccan whose rulers were defeated and re-instated, and presumably paid homage, if not taxes. It was the policy of the subsequent Gupta emperors to extend gradually the territory of the first category at the expense of the second, and to convert the territory of the third category into the second or the first.

Samudragupta was really a hero of hundred fights, as the court-poet describes him in a long laudatory inscription incised on the Asokan Pillar at Allahabad from which we know all the facts about him recorded above. He was, however, not merely the first soldier of his age, but a statesman of no mean order. He was besides, a man of culture. The court-poet describes him not only as brave and skilful in battle,



but also as a patron of learning, a celebrated poet and a musician. That these attributes were not merely fanciful exaggerations of the poet, appears from some coins of the emperor in which he is represented as playing upon the lyre. We are further told that he possessed a noble bearing, and was the favourite of his royal father as well as of the people at large. It even seems probable that although not the eldest son he was selected as his successor by Chandragupta I. The Gupta kings were patrons of Brahmanical religion, and Samudragupta restored the *Asvamedha* sacrifice which had fallen into abeyance for a long time. But he was of tolerant spirit, and extended his favour to other religions. This is well illustrated by his gracious permission to the Buddhist king of Ceylon to build a monastery for his subjects at Bodh-Gaya. It appears that the Ceylonese pilgrims to Bodh-Gaya felt great inconvenience for want of a suitable residence, and represented their grievances to the king Meghavarna of Ceylon. The latter sent an envoy with rich presents to Samudragupta to obtain permission to build a monastery for his subjects, and the Gupta emperor graciously sanctioned the laudable project, which was duly carried into effect.

Samudragupta died in or shortly before 380 A.D. and was succeeded by Chandragupta II, the worthy son of a worthy father. He not only successfully maintained the vast empire that his father had left, but also added to it by conquests of his own. Following in the footsteps of his father, he proceeded on a career of conquest. He first directed his arms against the Saka rulers known as Western Satraps ruling in Gujarat and Kathiawar Peninsula. Since the usurpation of the throne by Rudrasimha II, mentioned above, the Saka kingdom was passing through troublesome times. Neither he nor his son assumed the higher title of Mahakshatrapa, and after their reigns were over, no coins of this dynasty seem to have been issued for a period of 16 years from 332 to 348 A.D. A Saka official, Sridharavarman, had already set up as an independent king in Malwa, and there were probably similar revolts in other parts of the kingdom. The family of Rudrasimha II was ousted by Rudrasena III who restored the authority and prestige of the kingdom to some extent. He ruled from 360 to 380 A.D. in comparative peace, but soon troubles broke out again. More than one rival king appeared on the scene after 380 A.D., and the Saka kingdom was torn asunder by internal dissensions ending in the accession of Rudrasimha III, sometime between 380 and 398 A.D. Chandragupta had inherited an empire which almost touched on the borders of the

Saka kingdom, and he evidently took advantage of its internal dissensions, even if he did not actually foment them, to reduce these foreign chiefs. He accordingly invaded their territory with a powerful army. The details of the struggle are unknown, but Rudrasimha III, the last of the long line of Saka Satraps who had been ruling since 78 A.D., was killed, and his dominions were annexed by Chandragupta II. This conquest destroyed the last vestige of foreign rule in India, and extended the Gupta empire up to the Arabian Sea, its natural frontier on the west. The new acquisitions were, however, also important from another point of view. The Gujarat coast contained the important ports and harbours for vessels plying between India and the Western World. Masters of these stations, the Gupta kings came into possession of a vast source of wealth. Besides, their empire was now opened up, as it were, to the Western World, and the free intercourse between the two was probably of far-reaching consequence.

Chandragupta II was probably engaged in other wars and conquests also. An inscription, engraved on the famous iron pillar near Qutab Minar at Delhi states that a king Chandra "defeated a confederacy of hostile chiefs in Vanga, and having crossed in warfare the seven mouths of the river Sindhu, conquered the Vahlikas." This king Chandra is probably Chandragupta II, for we know of no other king of this name who could possibly carry on victorious military campaigns as far as Bengal in the east and beyond the Sindhu on the west.

If we accept the proposed identity, we must hold that Chandragupta II rounded off the Gupta empire and extended it to its natural frontier, not only in the west, as mentioned above, but also in the east and the north-west. The eastern campaign was probably necessitated by the rising of the petty chiefs of Bengal in a vain attempt to throw off the yoke of the Gupta empire which Samudragupta had already imposed on them. But they were defeated, and probably the whole of Bengal was now brought within the direct administration of the emperor.

The northwestern campaign was undoubtedly directed against the Kushana rulers of Afghanistan. If the Vahluka territory conquered by Chandragupta really represents Balkh (Bactria), its normal connotation, we must credit him with an achievement to which no other Hindu king can lay any claim, not even his namesake of the Maurya family. But

although it might have been a great success from a military point of view, its permanent results are uncertain. We do not know whether the tributary tribal states in the Punjab, through which he must have passed, were incorporated into the empire like Bengal, or whether the Kushana dominions, further beyond, were brought definitely within its fold. As a matter of fact, we have no further evidence that these territories were associated in any way with the Gupta empire after Chandragupta II. Chandragupta's chief queen was Dhruvadevi or Dhruvasvamini whose name figures in the strange legend of Ramagupta and gives it a semblance of reality. But he also married a princess of the Naga family named Kuveranaga. The issue of this marriage was a daughter named Prabhavatigupta who was married to the Vakataka king Rudrasena II. These two marriages were probably dictated by political considerations. For both the Nagas and the Vakatakas held strategic positions on the frontier of the Gupta empire, and might have rendered great help or proved highly dangerous in respect of the expansion of the Gupta empire to the west and north-west. The daughters of the Kadamba ruler Kakusthavarma of Kuntala (N. Kanara in Bombay) were married in the Gupta family, and we have already seen that Chandragupta I married the Lichchhavi princess Kumaradevi. All these indicate that matrimonial relations with powerful royal families formed a part of the imperial policy of the Guptas.

The reigns of Samudragupta and Chandragupta, covering nearly three-quarters of a century, once more brought about the political unity of Northern India. In spite of numerous wars people enjoyed prosperity and security of life and property. The administration was highly organised and was far more liberal than in the Maurya times. Fa-hien, a Chinese pilgrim, travelled through the Gupta Empire during the reign of Chandragupta II, and has left a very pleasing picture of the country. The taxes were light and the administration was very liberal. Cruel punishments, so much in vogue in Maurya times, were abolished, and harassing rules and regulations like Registration and Passports were unknown. Fa-hien everywhere witnessed the wealth and luxury of the people, and the economic conditions were very satisfactory. Trade and commerce flourished, and the people followed various arts and crafts. The period also ushered in a tremendous intellectual and religious revival, accompanied by wonderful achievements in art and architecture.

The chief credit for all this undoubtedly belongs to Samudragupta and Chandragupta II. Both of them assumed the title Vikramaditya and none had probably a juster claim to the position occupied in popular mind by that legendary hero. It is possible that the exploits of that hero were recalled to the people by those of the two Gupta emperors (and their successors some of whom assumed the same title) and the whole thing was jumbled up in the developed form of Vikramaditya-saga of later times. Most of the scholars, however, do not believe in the existence of a real or legendary king Vikramaditya before Chandragupta II. They regard him as the king Vikramaditya whom Indian legends credit with having defeated the Sakas and established the famous *Vikrama Samvat* in 58 B.C., and whose court is said to have been graced by *Navaratna* (nine gems) including the famous Kalidasa. Chandragupta II no doubt defeated the Sakas, and it is just possible that the poet Kalidasa lived in his court. But it is difficult to explain his connection with the *Vikrama Samvat* which was current for about five centuries before his time. It has been suggested that the era was not originally founded by any Vikramaditya, but later on associated with a king of that time. Convincing proofs, are however, lacking on this point, and the origin of the *Vikrama Samvat* and the identity of king Vikramaditya must still be reckoned among the unsolved problems of Indian history.

### Kumaragupta and Skandagupta

Chandragupta II died about 413 A.D., and was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta, who enjoyed a long reign of more than forty years. He performed an *Asvamedha* sacrifice, which usually implied some notable military conquest. But none is recorded, and we do not know of any of his achievements. The epigraphic records, however, show that he organised the administration of the vast empire. The very fact that he could consolidate the empire, and maintain intact its peace, prosperity and security for the long period of forty years, reflects no small credit upon his tact and ability. But towards the close of his reign hordes of the Pushyamitras, probably a tribe allied to the Hunas, that terrible scourge of mankind, invaded India and threatened the might fabric of the Gupta empire. For a long time, the fortune of the Guptas, any of India, was tottering, but the heroic energy and the military genius of the crown-prince Skandagupta at last saved the situation. The barbaric hordes were defeated and the empire was saved. So terrific

was the conflict that the heir to the mighty empire had to pass a night on the bare ground. India, which was thus delivered from the fury of these fierce, barbarians, did not fail to show its gratitude to its saviour. We are told that songs of praise in honour of Skandagupta were sung in all directions by men, women and even children. In the midst of this great triumph, the old and aged emperor Kumaragupta breathed his last, and Skandagupta, the hero of the nation, succeeded him (455 A.D.).

There are good grounds to believe that Skandagupta's succession to the throne was not a peaceful one, and there was a struggle between him and his half-brother Puru-gupta, son of the chief queen of Kumaragupta. Probably Skandagupta's mother was a queen of an inferior rank and this gave an advantage to his rival. But Skandagupta triumphed at the end. It is stated in his own official record that "the goddess of sovereignty, of her own accord, selected him as her husband, having in succession discarded all other princes." The same idea is probably also visibly portrayed on a type of Skandagupta's coins in which a female figure stands before the king and offers him something like a fillet. This rivalry between Skandagupta and Purugupta did not end with the accession of Skandagupta, and probably had repercussion on the question of succession after his death. Certain it is that Skandagupta was succeeded by Purugupta or his sons, who in their official records traced the genealogy direct from Kumaragupta omitting altogether the name of Skandagupta.

Skandagupta's reign seems to have been full of wars. His greatest enemies were the Hunas, a ferocious barbarian horde who lived in Central Asia and were at this very moment threatening the mighty Roman Empire. One branch of them, known as the Ephthalites or White Huns, occupied the Oxus valley and advanced against both Persia and India. They crossed the Hindu Kush, occupied Gandhara and hurled defiance at the mighty Gupta empire. It was a grave peril to the whole of India, and the magnitude of the danger must have been heightened by the tales of terrible atrocities and wholesale destruction which marked the advance of this cruel and vindictive race. The danger was perhaps far greater than the one which Skandagupta faced towards the close of his father's reign. Once more he rose equal to the occasion and inflicted such a terrible defeat upon the Hunas that for half a century they dared not disturb the Gupta empire though they wrought

havoc on Persia during this period. In the light of subsequent events in India, and the history of the Huna raids in other countries, the successful and effective resistance to them by Skandagupta must rank as one of the greatest achievements of the age. His grateful countrymen hailed him as the saviour of India and modern historians must endorse this popular verdict. This heroic feat fully entitled Skandagupta to assume the title Vikramaditya which Samudragupta and Chandragupta II did before him.

The Huna war, and possibly other battles which are only vaguely mentioned in official records, must have proved a great strain on the financial resources of the empire, for this alone can satisfactorily account for the fact that the gold coins issued by Skandagupta were not only comparatively small in number and belonged to a single type, as opposed to a large variety of his predecessors, but also show depreciation in the purity of gold. Nevertheless, we have evidence of large works of public utility undertaken at a distant corner of his empire. Two interesting inscriptions, engraved on the Girnar Hill near Junagadh, record the history of a big irrigation lake or reservoir, named Sudarsana originally constructed in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya by building an embankment across a small gap in a natural depression or the hill. The rain water collected there was carried by irrigation channels to distant lands and fertilised them. Once in 150 A.D. the embankment burst and was repaired by the Saka Satrap Rudradaman I, who left a record of his achievement in an inscription from which we know most of the details of his reign. The second inscription in this locality tells us that owing to excessive rain, the Sudarsana lake once again burst its embankment in the year 136 of the Gupta era (455-6 A.D.) in the reign of Skandagupta, but his governor Parnadatta, who was incharge of the province of Surashtra, repaired the damages and saved the people from a great calamity. These two inscriptions on the same hill testify to the great care bestowed on irrigation in ancient India; they are also silent witnesses of the great change by which the Saka kingdom became an integral part of the Gupta empire.

The inscription of Parnadatta enables us to visualize the real nature of the mighty Gupta empire as it developed in the time of Skandagupta. It shows us that the process of empire building initiated by Samudragupta was nearly completed so far at least as North India was concerned. The command of Skandagupta was obeyed by his

governors of Bengal and Kathiawar Peninsula, and one imperial writ ran from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea.

### **The Successors of Skandagupta**

According to a contemporary record, peace and prosperity prevailed over this vast empire at the time of Skandagupta's death, which probably took place about 467 A.D. The history of the Gupta empire, immediately after this, is very obscure. We know the names of a number of kings, but their dates and relation to each other cannot always be determined. Scholars naturally put forward different views about the reconstruction of the history of this period, none of which is free from objections. The following sketch should, therefore, be regarded as nothing more than a reasonable hypothesis on the basis of facts known at present.

As mentioned above, the official genealogy traces the succession in the Imperial Gupta family from Kumaragupta to his son Purugupta by his chief queen Anantadevi, and omits all reference to Skandagupta. We do not know for certain whether Purugupta ascended the throne immediately after his father's death and was ousted by Skandagupta after his return from his campaign against the Pushyamitras or whether Purugupta succeeded Skandagupta immediately or shortly after his death, either by natural right or by removing the legitimate heir. There is, however, no doubt that Purugupta did rule for sometime, though in either case his reign was probably a very short one. He was succeeded by his son Budhagupta whose earliest known date is in 477 A.D. But we have an inscription of a king called Kumaragupta (II) dated 474 A.D. His relation to Purugupta is not known, and his history is very obscure. It may be that he was Skandagupta's son or legitimate successor, who revolted against the usurpation of the throne by Purugupta, or by removing whom Purugupta ascended the throne. In any case Purugupta's son Budhagupta ruled from 477 A.D. to at least 495 A.D., and probably up to 500 A.D., without any rival, and there is no reason to suppose that the peace and prosperity of the empire suffered to any considerable extent during this period.

There were, however, ominous signs portending the break-up of the empire at no distant date. General Bhatarka of the Maitraka family, who was appointed governor of the distant province of Surashtra (Kathiawar Peninsula) with his headquarters at Valabhi, made his

position hereditary. Both he and his eldest son, who succeeded him, called themselves merely *Senapati* (General), but the latter's younger brother and successor, Dronasimha, assumed the title *Maharaja* and claimed that the paramount ruler in person installed him in royalty by a regular ceremony. The paramount ruler is not named, but was almost certainly no other than Budhagupta. This shows that the Maitrakas were well on the way to found the independent kingdom of Valabhi, but it also proves that they formally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Gupta empire, certainly up to the end of the 5th century A.D., and possibly for many years more, as we shall see later.

Things were not so bad in the opposite corner of the empire, but it was not perhaps without significance that, whereas, the governors of North Bengal had the title *Uparika* in the days of Kumaragupta I, they now called themselves *Uparika Maharaja*. The governors in Malwa also assumed the title *Maharaja*, and land-grants issued by several chiefs either do not contain reference to the reigning Gupta emperor, as was the custom, or simply refer to the Gupta sovereignty in general terms without mentioning the name of the emperor. These indicate that though theoretically the Gupta Empire did not suffer any substantial diminution and still extended from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, its power and prestige were visibly on the decline. The war of succession, if any, after the death of Kumaragupta I, and again after the death of Skandagupta or shortly before it, is probably chiefly responsible for this, and the severe strain of the Huna invasion might have been a contributing factor. There were probably other causes which we do not yet know, but there is no doubt that decline had already set in.

The death of Budhagupta was followed by a period of troubles caused by dissensions in the royal family, revolt of feudal chiefs, and foreign invasions—all the three acting and reacting upon each other. It is not possible to give a chronological narrative, or even to indicate broadly the sequence of events during the first half of the 6th century A.D. All that we can do is to bring out clearly the main facts under the three heads mentioned above.

It appears from the official genealogy that Budhagupta was succeeded by his brother Narasimhagupta and the latter by his son and grandson, named respectively Kumaragupta (III) and Vishnugupta. There are good grounds to believe that the last of these ended his reign



about 550 A.D. and it is, therefore, reasonable to presume that the reigns of the three successors of Budhagupta covered the first half of the 6th century A.D. But epigraphic records show that at least two other Gupta kings ruled during the period. One of them, Vainyagupta, issued a land-grant in Eastern Bengal in 507 A.D., and his gold coins and seals leave no doubt that he belonged to the Imperial Gupta family. The other, Bhanugupta, is also known from a single inscription dated 510 A.D. on a memorial pillar found at Eran (Saugor Dist. M.P.). It tells us that "the mightly king, the glorious Bhanugupta, the bravest man on the earth," fought a battle in which his feudatory chief Goparaja was killed, and the latter's wife died with him in the same funeral pyre,—the earliest epigraphic record of the *Sati* rite in India.

No coin or seal of Bhanugupta has as yet come to light. But his name and the qualifying epithets leave no reasonable doubt that he belonged to the Gupta family. We can also surmise, without difficulty, the enemies against whom he fought the famous battle at Eran. We know from two other epigraphic records found in this locality that sometime after the year 485 A.D. but within one generation, the region round Eran passed from the hands of the Guptas to a chief named Toramana who was most probably a Huna. It is almost certain, therefore, that Bhanugupta fought the great battle in 510 A.D. against this Huna invader. Unfortunately, the result of the battle is not known, and we cannot say whether Bhanugupta opposed the invader and failed, or drove him out after a short occupation of the country.

The rule of two Gupta kings who cannot be made to fit in with the official genealogy, and the penetration of the Hunas as far as Eran, leave no doubt that within a decade or two of Budhagupta's death, the Empire was faced with internal dissensions and foreign invasions. There might have been other disturbing factors too. For the Vakataka king Narendrasena is also said to have established his supremacy in Malwa and other parts of the Gupta empire. The invasion by the ruler of the Deccan probably also falls in this period.

### **The Huns and Yasodharman**

The Hunas who reappeared after half a century had grown very powerful in the meantime. Checked in India by Skandagupta, they had turned towards Persia. The Persian king Firuz, who opposed them, was defeated and killed. Emboldened by this success they spread far and

wide and by the end of the 5th century ruled over a vast empire with their headquarters at Balkh; Gandhara and probably also a part of the Punjab were included in their dominion.

So far we are more or less on sure grounds. But no details of the further progress of the Huns into India, and the opposition, if any, offered by the Gupta empire at the frontier, are known to us. When the curtain lifts, we find Toramana established in Eran, in the heart of the Gupta empire. Although there is no conclusive evidence that he was a Hun, all the circumstantial evidence points in this direction. But even then we cannot say whether he represented the central authority of the Hunas in Balkh of Gandhara, or was a freebooter who undertook the invasion on his own account, like Bakhtyar Khilji of a later period. In any case, the coins of Toramana show that he was a foreigner, closely associated with the Hunas, and ruled over a vast dominion in India comprising Kashmir, Punjab, Rajputana, Malwa and parts of the U.P. He was succeeded by his son Mihirakula, whose record has been found at Gwalior and whose great power and incredible cruelties are echoed in the popular legends recorded by Hiuen Tsang and in the *Rajatarangini*. According to the former his capital was at Sakala (Sialkot in the Punjab). A book, called *Christian Topography*, composed by an Alexandrine Greek sometime between 525 and 535 A.D., refers to the great power of the White Huns in India. Their country, he says, is on the other side of the Indus, but their chief Gollas "is the Lord of India; and oppressing the people, forces them to pay tribute." Gollas is most probably to be identified with Mihirakula, and we may well believe that he became a regular terror to the whole of North India.

But Mihirakula was not destined to enjoy his power for long. Two different sources refer to his defeat and discomfiture in the hands of two different persons which not only put an end to his power but also to the Hun menace in India.

The first to oppose Mihirakula was Yasodharman, whose brilliant career is known from a single record, engraved in duplicate on two pillars at Mandasor, in Malwa. He probably belonged to an old family known as Aulikara, whose members ruled in Malwa since the 4th century A.D., first as independent rulers, and then as feudatories of the Guptas. Yasodharman not only threw off the yoke of the Gupta

emperor but carried his victorious arms far and wide. According to the official eulogy his suzerainty was acknowledged over the vast area bounded by the Himalayas in the north, the Mahendra mountains (Ganjam District) in the south, the Brahmaputra river in the east, and the ocean in the west. It is also claimed that he was lord of the countries which were not possessed by the Guptas or the Hunas. Finally, we are told that "obeisance was made to his feet by even the famous king Mihirakula."

Even making due allowance for the obvious exaggerations of the court-poet, we may well believe that Yasodharman made himself master of a large part of the Gupta empire and inflicted a defeat upon Mihirakula. All this probably took place before 530 A.D. as a record dated in that year refers to Yasodharman as a great suzerain.

The victorious campaigns of Yasodharman and the extent of his dominions, as described by his court-poet, would seem to imply that the Gupta empire had ceased to exist. But this was far from being the case. For we have good grounds to believe that the Gupta emperor Narasimhagupta not only survived the shock but transmitted his kingdom and the imperial tradition to his son and grandson. What is more important, he probably dealt the final blow which crushed Mihirakula. This we learn from Hiuen Tsang who describes in great detail how Mihirakula invaded Magadha, was defeated and captured by king Baladitya and how his life was saved at the intercession of the queen-mother of Magadha. Mihirakula returned to his dominions only to find that his brother had usurped the throne. He took shelter in Kashmir, seized its throne by treachery, and conquered Gandhara, but died within a year.

It is difficult to accept as true all the details recorded by Hiuen Tsang, but the general outline of his story, as given above, may be regarded as historical. There is also no doubt that Baladityaraja of Magadha, as Hiuen Tsang puts it, refers to the Gupta emperor Narasimhagupta, whose gold coins show that he assumed the title Baladitya. In an inscription at Nalanda, of the 8th century A.D., the king Baladitya is described as "the great king of irresistible valour who after having vanquished all the foes enjoyed the entire earth." The fact that even two hundred years later Narasimhagupta Baladitya lived in popular memory as a great king and conqueror lends some support to

the story of Hiuen Tsang about him. It is interesting to note that both Hiuen Tsang and the 8th century inscription credit Baladitya with having founded a great temple at Nalanda.

The question naturally arises, what had Narasimhagupta been doing during the first 30 years of the 6th century A.D. after the death of Budhagupta? We do not positively know, but may suggest that his power was kept in check, and possibly rendered nugatory, first by the rise of rival kings like Vainyagupta and Bhanugupta, and then by the successful revolt of Yasodharman. It is also not unlikely that he ascended his ancestral throne only after the death of these rivals, hiding himself or leading an obscure life during this long period of thirty to forty years. For all we know, it is not unlikely that Vainyagupta or Bhanugupta, if not both, had a more legitimate claim to the throne, and that Narasimhagupta, by virtue of his descent, occupied the throne at a comparatively advanced age after the empire had been convulsed by the Hunas and the military campaigns of Yasodharman.

### **The Fall of the Gupta Empire**

Whatever, we may think of these possible alternatives, we may regard it as tolerably certain that Narasimhagupta and his two successors carried on the imperial tradition till about the middle of the 6th century A.D. This is proved, among others, by the fact that following the old tradition, all the land-grants of the Maitrakas of Valabhi, 14 in number, ranging in date between 526 and 545 A.D., express allegiance to *paramabhaitaraka* or the paramount lord. The allegiance is no doubt nominal and formal, but this very fact shows that the paramount lord refers to the Gupta emperor. For such formal honour is usually paid to old royal families out of long-standing custom. A new authority either exacts real submission or is simply ignored.

Hiuen Tsang refers to Narasimhagupta as king of Magadha. Possibly his effective authority did not extend much beyond Magadha and North Bengal. A land-grant in North Bengal, dated 543 A.D., mentions as suzerain, one whose name is lost except the last two letters 'Gupta'. Possibly he was Vishnugupta, son of Kumaragupta III and grandson of Narasimhagupta. All these three kings issued gold coins of the same type, but their continued debasement proves the rapid decline of the Gupta power.

This decline was precipitated by the assumption of independence

by the provincial governors and feudal chiefs. Yasodharman set the fatal example which was perhaps more disastrous to the Gupta empire than even the Huna invasion. How Yasodharman's power came to an end, and what became of him or his successors, we do not know. He rose and vanished like a meteor without leaving any trace behind. This gave the Gupta empire some respite, but it was of short duration. Yasodharman's example was followed by others. Among them the most powerful were the Later Guptas and the Maukharis who were at first feudatories to the Guptas but later established independent kingdoms in Magadha and the U.P. Independent kingdoms were also established in Bengal and other parts of India, and the Gupta empire now offered the same spectacle as was presented by the Mughul empire after the invasion of Nadir Shah. But while the phantom Mughul emperors sat on the throne of Delhi for a century more, we do not hear of any Gupta emperor after Vishnugupta, though it is possible that he might have one or more successors whose names are yet unknown to us.

A land-grant was issued in the Gaya district, in the very heart of Magadha, in 551-2 A.D. by a person who calls himself *Kumaramatyā Maharaja*. As no reference is made to the Gupta king, we must presume that by 550 A.D. the Guptas had ceased to exercise any effective authority even in Magadha. But the official name *Kumaramatyā* shows that like the *Viziers* of Avadh, he dared not throw off the last vestige of homage to the Imperial House. But of that House itself we have no further evidence.

It would appear from what has been said above that the Huna invasion was not the sole, or perhaps even the principal, cause of the downfall of the Gupta empire, as is generally supposed. The more important causes were the internal dissensions in the royal family and the revolt of the provincial governors or feudal chiefs. These were the immediate causes, though the Huna invasion might have been a remote cause and contributory factor of no mean importance.

The period of Gupta supremacy which covers more than two centuries is regarded by common consent as the most glorious epoch in Indian history. This view is fully justified by the wonderful outburst of intellectual activity in art, science and literature such as we witness not only during this period but also for a century more, which together constitute the Gupta Age, properly so-called. It has been styled variously as the Golden, Classical, its and the Periclean Age of India.

### Ramagupta

According to a popular story which forms the subject-matter of a dramatic work, *Devi-Chandraguptam*, Samudragupta was succeeded by his elder son Ramagupta. This king, we are told, was so cowardly and devoid of a sense of honour, that once while he was closely besieged by a Saka king and found no means to escape, he readily agreed to purchase his safety by surrendering his queen Dhruvadevi to his adversary. His younger brother Chandragupta, however, rejected this proposal with scorn. He disguised himself as the queen and, with a few brave followers similarly disguised as female attendants, visited the camp of the Saka king in compliance with the terms of the treaty, killed the Saka king, and returned in safety. Naturally he won high favour of the queen and the people who were thoroughly disgusted at the conduct of the king. Taking advantage of the unpopularity of king Ramagupta, Chandragupta killed him, seized the throne, and married the widowed queen Dhruvadevi.

That this story had wide currency in later times is proved by both epigraphic and literary records. The earliest reference to it is to be found in a passage in *Harsha-charita* (7th century A.D.) which simply mentions the fact that Chandragupta, disguised in female attire, killed the Saka king who coveted another's wife. The more important parts of the story *viz.* that Chandragupta deprived his elder brother of his life, wife, and throne, appears in a Rashtrakuta inscription of the 9th century A.D. Further references occur in literary works of later date.

In spite of this corroborative evidence it is difficult to accept the story as historically true. Apart from the inherent improbability of the story, the fact remains that the name of Ramagupta never occurs in the genealogical lists of the Gupta emperors supplied by numerous seals and inscriptions, and is not found in a single inscription. A few coins with the name Ramagupta have been found but they do not show any resemblance to the genuine coins of the Gupta dynasty.

### Note—Mohyal Brahmins

The Mohyals who are a subsect of the Sarasvata Brahmins and who are found all over the Punjab, the Northwestern Frontier Province and even Afghanistan claim with justice and propriety that Jaipal and Anandapala were Mohyal Brahmins. The Mohyal Brahmins throughout

Mohammedan, Sikh and British times have undoubtedly distinguished themselves as great generals and soldiers. Indeed, these Brahmins hold that begging or trading is prohibited to them. They believe that they are descended from Asvatthama and other Brahmin heroes of the Mahabharata. Whatever this may be, it is probable that this Brahmin sub-caste became Kshatriya or military caste and attained to fame in the days of the Shahi Brahmin kings of Kabul. Indeed, their case, is similar to the case, in later times, of the Chitpawan Brahmins. From the days of Balaji Vishwanath, first Peshwa, the Chitpawans became a military caste and in the time of the Peshwas they were employed both as military and civil officers. Under the British they are employed only in civil services naturally enough.

The Mohyals are divided into seven exogamous families; Datta, Vaid, Bali, Chhibbar, Mohan, Bamwal and Lawa. Jaipal is said by Mohyals to be a Datta with Bharadvaja *gotra*. It may be mentioned that Rambhuj Datta Chowdhari of Amritsar was a Mohyal Datta and the revenue minister to the late Amir of Afghanistan, Dewan Narayandas of Bhera now aged 90, is a Mohyal Chhibbar. It is not necessary here to mention the noted Mohyal commanders who distinguished themselves in Mohammedan, Sikh and British times.

### Sabuktagin and Jaipal

The history of the conflicts of Turks and Hindus and especially of the invasions of India by Mahmud has been written in detail by Mohammedan historians from Al-Utbi a contemporary of Mahmud to Firishta who lived about 1500 A.D. in the Deccan and by European writers from gifted Gibbon down to Elliot, Elphinstone &c. and Lane-Poole and Smith, as also by noted German and French writers. Dr. Vincent Smith further has brought to bear upon this history his extensive knowledge of Indian epigraphic and numismatic evidence. Yet the history requires to be sifted and reconsidered from the Indian point of view and in the light of modern Indian research. It requires to be examined in the crucible of historical probabilities and tested by the fire of historical criticism. It is not doubt impossible to add many new facts but it is possible to reject some absurd stories and ideas. We shall try to do this in the succeeding chapters, as far as can be done by bringing to bear upon this, history the light derived from modern Indian research and by looking at it from the view-point of the Hindus.

It may be pointed out that even contemporary historians like Utbi who are more to be relied upon than any later writers have to be subjected to the usual criticism; much more so later writers like Firishta.

Sabuktagin having established himself in the principality of Ghazni naturally tried to extend his dominion. This small principality was like a drop of oil on the surface of the expanse of Hindu waters. But the oil expanded on all sides till it spread, in the days of his son, over the whole expanse of Afghanistan and the Punjab. Sabuktagin first conquered Kandahar and Bust, capital of the Rajput country, as stated before. He also conquered and annexed Al-Rukhaj or Arachosia of the Greeks which was called "White India" by the Parthians. Conquering Kasdar the capital and its king he made him a tributary using the coin and name of Sabuktagin. Having thus secured his rear, Sabuktagin aspired to conquer east and north and naturally came into conflict with Jaipal king of Kabul and Wahind.

It is needless to enquire who was the aggressor, for the law among kings and even nations or peoples not only in ancient times but even in the twentieth century was and is the law of the brute, *viz.* that the strong should despoil and even destroy the weak. Utbi simply says, "Having completed the conquest of Kasdar, Sabuktagin directed his thoughts towards the conquest of the infidels." "To the desire of conquest was added the zeal of the true believer." "With sincere fervour and pure design of pleasing God he undertook the hardship of that sacred war and possessed himself of many castles and strongholds of those far lands." "By these fortified places and territories he augmented the boundaries of his kingdom." "But when Jaipal king of Hindustan marked these things and saw the line of his frontier continually diminishing and the losses caused every moment in his states, that grievance rendered him inconsolable." He, therefore, attempted to muster his full force to oppose Sabuktagin. Utbi relates that a strong force composed of many allies entered into the territory of Sabuktagin who advanced from Ghazni to meet it. There was a terrible conflict lasting for many days. "Eventually Mahmud suggested to his father that in the region where the encampment of the accursed lay, the water of a spring was clean and bright, but whenever any impure thing was thrown into it, furious winds arose and a bitter cold succeeded. Nasiruddin, therefore, commanded that they should cast some wine flasks into the fountain. Immediately a grey mist spread over the land, extreme cold came and the soldiers of Jaipal could not endure their



sufferings. He, therefore, sued for peace and on his threatening that all the Rajputs would die the death of despair on their swords, peace was granted on condition that a large sum of money was given and a number of elephants, as also certain fortresses in the country of Jaipal were handed over to the Moslems. Thereupon, Jaipal retired but eventually when in his country he refused to handover the fortresses and imprisoned the men who had come to take possession. Sabuktagin who had marched back to Ghazni again set out with his army and plundered Jaipal's territory, massacred the inhabitants and carried away the children and cattle as booty." He made the territory of Lamghan entirely stript and bare and destroying the temples built mosques in their place.

"When Jaipal witnessed the destruction of his kingdom and the consequences of his treacherous infraction of the treaty he found himself powerless to do anything. He, therefore, despatched letters to the various princes of India imploring aid." "An innumerable army assembled and advanced. The Amir, whose forces were comparatively few, ordered that successive attacks by cohorts of his horsemen should be made and in this way they forced their onward march and terrified the infidels. Then they made one simultaneous charge and made some prisoners while the rest fled throwing away their weapons and incumbrances." "The judgment of god is upon those who stray away from Him and this judgment cannot be evaded." "The Hindus did not invade again and this territory was entirely annexed to the land of Islam and the inhabitants brought beneath the wings of his prosperous care." "And whenever he needed, a thousand horsemen attended his stirr-up."

Such is the account given by Utbi of the conflicts between the Amir Sabuktagin and Jaipal. They were two in number and until the end of his reign Sabuktagin does not appear to have had any further conflicts with Jaipal worth mentioning, his attention being engaged towards the west in succouring his overlord Mansur bin Nuh, the Samani king, in increasing his influence at his court and in acquiring provinces, so to speak in Jaghir. Mahmud is said to have assisted his father in both these conflicts as also in his activities in the west in the Samani empire.

Subsequent Mohammedan historians have added to this account many more details which may be neglected; but this account itself requires to be subjected to the test of probability and historical criticism.

Utbi has not given the dates of these events and Utbi's dates are often faulty (Elliot II). Sabuktagin ruled from 977 to 997 A.D. and these events may be taken to have happened about 980 to 985 A.D. If the date of Mahmud's birth be taken as October 971, he would be too young to take part in these wars but if it be taken four years earlier, he would be then from 14 to 17 years of age and a young prince of this age in the east is considered fit, and is allowed, to take part in actual fighting. But he cannot be taken to be able to give counsel to his father or to insist on continuing hostilities to the bitter end, as later Mohammedan historians represent. Then again, the supernatural element in the account has to be given up and we may believe that the intense cold and mist or snowfall which came to discomfit the Hindus in the first battle was a natural phenomenon and was not caused by any supernatural agency. The story of the water of the fountain in the Hindu camp being defiled may, however, be believed in as the Rajputs of those days, at least the reigning kings, abstained from wine, as even Arab writer satisfy. Especially Jaipal being a Brahmin must certainly have abstained from wine. The spoiling again of the water from which the enemy drinks is a measure which is often resorted to in war. It is advocated even in the Mahabharata. It was practised in ancient western fights and was resorted to even in the last European War. Handicapped for want of pure water to drink and harassed by the intense cold of the inclement adventitious weather to which the soldiers of the plains of Northern India were not accustomed, this confederacy of Indian princes failed to achieve its object. But it was not defeated and the Rajputs were ready to sell their lives dearly if necessary. It seems probable that the negotiations for peace at this first battle must have ended in honourable terms of peace, *viz.*, the payment of an indemnity and the present of a number of elephants. And the allies must have returned home.

This view is further supported by Indian epigraphic evidence which shows that the Chandella king Dhanga who appears to have taken part in this confederacy of Indian princes is declared to be "the equal of Hammina". This battle was most probably a drawn one and the Indian allies returned in consequence of inclement weather. The battle may be taken to have been fought in 980 A.D. Dhanga began his reign about 950 and ruled long till about 1000 A.D. and died when he was above a hundred years old.

When Firishta and other later historians write that kings of Delhi, Ajmer, Kanauj and Kalanjar took part in this war, they certainly exaggerate and bring kings of later renown into the affair. We know and have seen that Delhi was insignificant in 980 A.D.; it is not even mentioned by Al-Beruni in his geographical chapter on India. And Ajmer had not even been founded; and the Chauhan kings of Sambhar were not so strong as to send a contingent. Bhoja of Malwa came later still, *i.e.* in 1010 A.D. to the throne. Al-Utbi has not given the names of the countries in India whose kings took part in this general endeavour. And Indian epigraphic evidence speaks of Dhanga only. Kanauj or the imperial Hindu kingdom of Northern India might have taken part in the confederacy. From the Chamba Gazetteer we find that its king Sahilavarman took part in this religious war.

Utbi's account of the second battle seems to be of more doubtful credibility. In the first place, the first defeat of the Hindus was only nominal and the delivery of fortresses in Jaipal's territory was a condition too exacting. Secondly, if it had been agreed upon, Jaipal was not the man treacherously to break it as soon as he was safe within his own country. The Brahmin kings of Kabul, like in fact the Rajput kings of the whole of India at this time, were men of honour. Even Al-Beruni praises this high character; Mohammedan though he was, he was a truthful observer of the Hindus and their character and he gives a very flattering description of the probity and goodness of these kings of Kabul. "In all their grandeur" he remarks "they never slackened their ardent desire for doing what was good and right; they are men of noble sentiment and noble bearing." Thirdly, it is not possible that kings of different countries in India would again combine so soon after their first attempt had failed. Lastly, if the combined army was so vast as to number about one lakh of men and included several hundreds of elephants, the tactics of Sabuktagin in attacking them incessantly with bodies of 500 horsemen could not have succeeded and the Hindus could not have been so signally defeated. Sir Vincent Smith mentions here the fact that Alexander had adopted the same tactics in his battle with Porus. But Alexander's cavalry was disciplined and Sabuktagin's cavalry could not have been a disciplined force in the sense that Alexander's cavalry was. The Rajputs too were not less known for their cavalry and it is impossible to believe that in such a vast force there was no cavalry with the Hindus. The Pratiharas of Kanauj were, even according to Arab writers, known for their numerous

and efficient cavalry. And the Kanauj monarch, the foremost king and emperor in Middle India continuous to the kingdom of Jaipal, must have been one of the allies assembled to assist Jaipal and he is actually mentioned as taking part. The probability is that this account of the second battle is an exaggerated one containing a repetition of the story of the assembling of allies with a vast force. It seems that Sabuktagin must again have invaded the territory of Jaipal after sometime on one pretext or another or on no pretext whatever for reasons stated in the beginning. And Jaipal must have opposed him with such force as he could muster from his own kingdom and he was signally defeated. He lost much of his territory up to the Indus but not the whole of Gandhara. He may have lost the southern part of it including Bannu, for he still appears to be ruling in Peshawar and Wahind as we shall presently see.

Sabuktagin appears to have thoroughly incorporated the conquered territory with his own kingdom, by forcible conversion of the people to Mohammedanism. Elliot thinks that both the battles may have been fought in the valley of Lamghan or Jalalabad. And Lamghan south and north of Kabul river must have been lost to Jaipal. The story of the conversion of the Aspahbad of Kabul, incidentally related by Al-Beruni, must have belonged to this period and not to the time of Alptagin as is supposed by some, as it appears that Jaipal was long called king of Kabul also.

After this affair, according to Utbi, Sabuktagin's attention was absorbed by his affairs in the Samani empire, and this was feasible as his eastern frontier up to the mountain range to the west of the Indus was now safe. Mansur died about this time and he was succeeded by his son Nuh who called upon his services in crushing certain rebellions in his provinces and Sabuktagin gladly and loyally gave this assistance and quelled the rebellions. He was rewarded with the governorship of Khorasan and Sabuktagin appointed Mahmud to that post. Mahmud was here attacked by a rebel, Abu Ali, and in the fierce battle fought with him Mahmud distinguished himself by his personal bravery. In this battle Hindu soldiers and elephants were used by Mahmud. As we shall have to explain elsewhere, Hindu soldiers had no objection to fight for any one who paid them. But the chief thing to be pointed out here is that Mahmud could use elephants with great advantage and the cavalry of the enemy could not do anything against them. "The war

elephants seized the horsemen with their trunks and broke their backs beneath their feet until innumerable people perished on that battlefield."

Eventually, Sabuktagin became so powerful in the Samani empire by means of his powerful and disciplined army that he could make and unmake viziers at Bokhara, the capital of the Samani kings, as Shahaji could make and unmake kings in Nizamshahi and even kept the Samani emperor Nuh in fear of himself as Shahaji was feared at Bijapur. Sabuktagin usually resided at Balk and not at Ghazni latterly and eventually died there. He intended to return to Ghazni but that was not to be. He left the Ghazni kingdom to his son Ismail by will, probably thinking that Mahmud would be satisfied with his governorship of Khorasan at the capital of which, *viz.* Nishapur, he resided. This was again something like what happened to Shivaji Shahaji left his own acquisitions at Banglore to his other son and left Shivaji to remain content with the Poona Jaghir. Apparently Mahmud and Shivaji, though more capable, were less favourite with their fathers than their brothers. However, in both cases the more capable son asserted himself and eventually became the master of the whole estate. It is needless to relate at length how Mahmud laid claim to Ghazni and the treasure amassed there and being opposed, advanced on Ghazni, fought a battle with Ismail before its walls, defeated him and eventually took him prisoner. In this battle "black masses of elephants fought on the side of Ismail but to no avail." Elephants were useful within certain limits and Sabuktagin like other Mohammedan kings kept elephants and used them in fighting. Naturally, these were at this time in the hands of Ismail whose incapacity, however, prevented him from using them with effect. By this battle Mahmud became the master of the Ghaznavide kingdom in 997 A.D.

# 7

## Administration in North India

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### Up to the Accession of Harsha-Vardhana

The break up of the Gupta empire was followed by inevitable results. The provinces and feudatory states declared their independence and the whole of North India was divided into a number of independent states. In the home provinces of the Guptas we find a long line of rulers, all of whom except one had their names ending in Gupta. Hence, the family is known in History as the 'Later Guptas of Magadha'. It is not possible to determine whether they were connected in any way with the imperial Guptas. Nor are we quite sure whether they occupied Magadha from the very beginning, as they certainly did in later times. It is held by some that they ruled in Malwa till the time of Harshavardhana. Some of the kings of this family were very powerful and carried their victorious arms as far as the Brahmaputra. More than one of them had to fight hard with their neighbour, the Maukharis, whose territory corresponded to the United Provinces or Uttar Pradesh, and who were rapidly rising to power. The Maukharis conquered part of Magadh and some branches of the family ruled even in the Gaya District. Two of their kings, Isanavarman and his son Sarvavarman, styled themselves *Maharajadhiraja*, and this pretension to supreme power was backed by conquest of extensive territories including the Andhra country. But the principal event in the history of the Maukharis, and the one which entitles them to be commemorated in Indian History, is the stubborn opposition they offered to the Hunas, who once more moved towards the heart of India. It has been already related how these black marauders, the scourge of the civilised world, more than once

poured like a deluge upon the fair valleys and cities of India. It is painful to describe the scenes that followed. Rapine, massacre and incendiarism marked the route of the barbarians. Cities were blotted out of existence, finest buildings were reduced to a heap of ruins, and temples and monasteries, even where they were not violently pulled down, stood empty and desolate. The valley of the Kabul and Swat rivers, one of the most flourishing centres of Indian civilisation, was so completely devastated that the greater part of it has ever since remained outside the pale of civilisation, fit only for the habitation of wild tribes like those who live there today.

The terror which the advancing Hunas inspired in the millions of Indian hearts can better be imagined than described. It was at this critical moment that the Maukharis stood as bulwark of Indian civilisation. Under the leadership of Isanavarman the Indians fought stubbornly to protect their heart and home. After a long and arduous struggle the Maukhari chief succeeded in checking the Hunas and thus saved Eastern India from their aggression.

Of the various other powers that arose out of the ruins of the Gupta empire, two only need specific mention. As related above, the Maitraka clan, under its leader Bhatarka, established a kingdom in Saurashtra with Valabhi as capital. The earlier chiefs of the dynasty were feudatory to the Guptas, but soon after the destruction of that power they declared their independence. From this time the boundaries of the kingdom were rapidly extended and Valabhi became not only a seat of learning and culture, but also a centre of trade and commerce. The Maitraka clan continued as an important power for well nigh three hundred years when they were probably overthrown by the Arab invaders from Sindh.

Another State which was founded about the same time as Valabhi, but was destined to play a far more distinguished part in Indian history, was that of Thaneswar. The first-three kings of this dynasty are mere names and do not seem to have exercised considerable powers. The fourth king Prabhakaravadharna extended his kingdom at the expense of his neighbours, and assumed the imperial title of *Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja*. His sovereignty probably extended to the whole of the Punjab in the north-west and part of Malwa in the south. He was busy in his aggressive expeditions when he died in 604 A.D., leaving two sons, Rajyavardhana and Harshavardhana, and a daughter Rajyasri-

married to the Maukhari king Grahavarman. Rajyavardhana, being the elder of the two sons, succeeded his father.

While Prabhakara-vardhana was rapidly extending the boundaries of his kingdom towards the west and south, two powerful kingdoms were established in Bengal and Assam. The people of Bengal are not known to have played any important political part in Indian history till after the downfall of the Imperial Guptas. About 525 A.D. an independent kingdom was established in Vanga *i.e.* East and South Bengal, but North Bengal still remained under the Guptas. When the Gupta empire fell, Gauda, comprising West and probably also North Bengal asserted independence, but was defeated by the Maukharis. Half a century later, the throne of Gauda was occupied by Sasanka. He fixed his capital at Karnasuvarna (near Murshidabad) and probably soon made himself master of the whole of Bengal. He belongs to the same type of military adventurers as Yasodharman, and we know equally little of his predecessors and successors. Like Yasodharman he rose and vanished like meteor, leaving behind only the record of asplendid military career. Under him Bengal commenced that career of aggrandisement which was destined to raise her to the position of imperial supremacy. He conquered Orissa and annexed it to his dominions. He also established his supremacy over the kingdom of Kongoda in the Ganjam district. He then advanced against Kanauj in the west. This region was then occupied by the Maukharis, whose enmity with Bengal commenced half a century ago, as mentioned above. But the Maukhari king Grahavarman, as already related, had married the daughter of Prabhakaravardhana and this alliance no doubt strengthened his position. As a counter-move against this, Sasanka contracted an alliance with the king of Malava, who was glad to obtain the aid of such a powerful ally against the king of Thaneswar who was invading his territories.

Thus, at the time when Rajyavardhana ascended the throne, there were two political leagues in Northern India under the leadership of the two most powerful kingdoms of Bengal and Thaneswar. It appears that the Bengal group took the initiative and completely surprised the Maukhari capital. The king Grahavarman was killed and the queen Rajyasri thrown into prison.

So complete was the surprise that the first news of the battle and its tragic end reached Rajyavardhana at the same time. He at once



proceeded with a force of 10,000 cavalry to avenge the wrongs done to his sister. His promptness of action had its reward. He met with an advance-guard of the enemy under the king of Malava and defeated him. Then with the small force at his command, he proceeded towards Kanyakubja. On the way, he was killed by Sasanka, and his discomfited host returned to Thaneshwar (606 A.D.).

An impenetrable mystery hangs round this tragic episode. The partisans of Rajyavardhana have ascribed his murder to foul treachery on the part of Sasanka, but there are reasons to believe that this is a perversion of truth for party purposes. Our sole authorities, Banabhatta and Hiuen Tsang, were both hostile to Sasanka, and cannot be looked upon as impartial. But while they agree as to the treachery of Sasanka, they widely differ as to the circumstances under which it was played. On the other hand, the almost contemporary inscription of Harsha says that Rajyavardhana "gave up his life in the mansion of his foe owing to his adherence to a promise." Between these widely divergent accounts, it is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion. Certain it is, that Rajya-vardhana failed in his enterprise and lost his life.

### **Harshavardhana**

On the death of Rajyavardhana the councillors of State offered the throne to his younger brother Harsha-vardhana, also known as Siladitya. At first the nobles of the court hesitated to offer, and the young Harsha-vardhana was reluctant to accept the terrible responsibilities of kingship at such a critical time, but all doubts and fears were set at rest by the indomitable energy and military genius which the young king displayed on his accession (606 A.D.). He swore vengeance at Sasanka and equipped a large expedition against him. He also entered into an alliance with Bhaskara-varman, king of Kamarupa, who was afraid of the growing power of Sasanka. But Harsha's first care was for his sister. News arrived that she had been set free from the prison of Kanauj by the magnanimity of her foe, but felt so distracted at the news of her brother's death, that she retired to the vindhya forest. There Harsha traced her, just at the very moment when, out of sheer desperation, she was going to throw herself into fire with all her attendants.

Having rescued his sister, Harsha joined his army on the bank of the Ganga and then proceeded on a career of conquest to the east

with a view to avenge the death of his brother by defeating Sasanka. He was successful in his military enterprise, and conquered a great part of Northern India. Hiuen Tsang tells us that "he waged incessant warfare, until in six years, he had fought the five Indians. Then, having enlarged his territory, he increased his army, bringing the elephant corps up to 60,000, and the cavalry to 100,000, and reigned in peace for thirty years without raising a weapon." This sweeping statement about the success of Harsha's arms requires some correction. In the first place, the chief object of his military campaign was not fulfilled. For Sasanka seems to have reigned in glory till at least 619 A.D., as in an inscription, dated in that year, he is invoked as the suzerain power by a feudatory chief in the Ganjam District. Secondly, Harsha's attempts to carry his arms beyond the Narmada completely failed, and he sustained a decisive defeat in the hands of Pulakesin, the Chalukya king of the south.

Towards the close of his reign Harsha undertook another military campaign to the east. Sasanka was now dead and he had left now able heir to maintain his empire. Harsha had consequently no difficulty in overrunning it. He conquered Magadha and carried his victorious arms through West Bengal as far as Kongoda (Ganjam District), the southern limit of Sasanka's empire. The rest of Sasanka's dominions *i.e.* North, South and East Bengal, passed into the hands of Bhaskara-varman, king of Kamarupa. The old alliance thus bore fruit in the disruption of Sasanka's empire.

Much exaggerated notion is prevalent about the wide extent of Harsha's empire. But though his great power was recognized throughout North India, and many potentates, including the Maitraka king of Valabhi, his son-in-law, and Bhaskara-varman, his old friend, thought it politic to be submissive even to the extent of attending his court, it does not appear that Harsha exercised suzerain power over any considerable stretch of territory outside the limit of the present provinces of Eastern Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa. The idea that his empire included the whole of Northern India would not bear a moment's scrutiny. For Kashmir, Western Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Rajputana, Nepal and Kamarupa were certainly independent states in his days. But even then we must regard him as a great conqueror and a powerful emperor.

It is not, however, as a great conqueror alone that Harshavardhana figures in Indian history. He has earned an undying reputation for his peaceful activities, so vividly described by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who travelled all over India during his fourteen years' stay in this country (630-644 A.D.), and came into intimate personal contact with the great emperor.

Harshavardhana was unwearied in his efforts towards maintaining an efficient government in the country. He personally looked into the affairs of state, and constantly travelled over different parts of his empire to see things with his own eyes. The result was that his civil administration was carried on benign principles, though it is obvious that degeneration had set in since the days of the Imperial Guptas. The roads were evidently less safe, for the Chinese pilgrim himself was robbed by brigands more than once, and the criminal code was more sanguinary. Mutilation of the nose, ears, hands or feet was penalty for serious offences, and ordeals by fire, water, weight and poison seem to have been much in vogue.

The great emperor was not only a patron of learning but himself an author of no small merit. Three of his Sanskrit plays, *Nagananda*, *Ratnavali* and *Priyadarsika* have survived the trials of time, and deservedly achieved high reputation among lovers of Indian literature. He gathered around him a circle of learned men, of whom *Banabhatta*, the author of *Harshacharita* (Biography of Harsha) and *Kadmabari*, is the most wellknown.

Harshvardhana was probably Saiva in faith, but he was not only tolerant of, but actually devoted to, other religious sects as well. His charitable institutions were numerous. Like Asoka, he built rest-houses and hospitals, and endowed numerous religious establishments both Brahmanical and Buddhist. Later in his life, he seems to have shown a distinct partiality towards Buddhism, and forbade the slaughter of animals. He is said to have erected thousands of Buddhist *Stupas* on the banks of the Ganga, and a number of monasteries at the sacred places of the Buddhists. Besides, he annually summoned a convocation of the Buddhists, where discussions and disputations were held among the Brethren, and rewarded those who were most successful in debate. Moral excellence was the only passport to his favour. He befriended princes and statesmen who were virtuous, and would not even design to converse with those who were of opposite character.

Harshavardhana became the patron of Hiuen Tsang who is lavish in his praises of the great emperor. Most of the facts we have stated about Harshavardhana are known from the wonderful records left by the pilgrim, which, besides, give us a detailed picture of the condition of India such as we do not find anywhere else. Harsha-var dhana met the Chinese pilgrim in West Bengal, and being delighted in his company, held a special assembly at Kanauj in his honour. It was attended by twenty tributary kings, four thousand Buddhist monks and about three thousand Jains and orthodox Brahmanas. On the west bank of the Ganga, the king built a specious monastery, and a tower 100 ft. high, and put a golden image of Buddha of his own height within the latter. A little to the west of this was built the temporary palace of the king and pavilions for other guests. Every morning a small golden image of Buddha, 3 ft. in height, was carried in splendid procession from the royal palace to the tower. The king himself, dressed as Sakra (Indra), and escorted by 500 war-elephants, held the canopy and scattered pearls, gold, silver flowers, and various other precious substances on the way. A long train of caparisoned elephants carried the tributary kings, their escorts, and other guests, and 100 great elephants carried musicians who sounded their drums and raised their music. After the procession was over, the king offered to the image of Buddha tens, hundreds and thousands of silken garments, decorated with precious gems. Then, after the feast, the men of learning assembled in the hall to discuss the most abstruse subjects, the Chinese pilgrim being of course accorded the place of honour. In the evening the guests retired to their dwellings. This solemn programme was repeated every day, for about a month, when the monastery suddenly took fire, and was partially destroyed. Harsha-var dhana was surveying the scene from the top of a *stupa* when a fanatic, knife in hand, rushed towards him. The attempt on his life failed, and the assassin confessed that he was engaged by the Brahmanas who were infuriated at the excessive favour shown by the king towards the Buddhists. These men had deliberately set the monastery on fire in order to kill the king in the confusion which would follow. The chief culprits were punished and the rest were pardoned.

After the ceremony at Kanauj had closed amid these tragic incidents, the emperor, accompanied by the Chinese pilgrim, proceeded to Prayaga (Allahabad), where he used to celebrate another solemn festival at the end of every five years, at the confluence of the Ganga

and the Yamuna. All the vassal kings attended, and the king had already summoned there the followers of different religious sects, the poor, the orphan and the needy for receiving gifts.

Towards the west of the junction of the two rivers there was a great plain, called "the Arena of charitable offerings", as from very ancient times kings from different parts of India frequented this spot for the purpose of practising charity. Here the emperor amassed his treasure and performed the ceremony, which lasted for about 3 months, and has been vividly described by the biographer of Hiuen Tsang.

"On the first day they installed the image of Buddha and distributed precious articles of the first quality and clothing of the same character.

The second day they installed the image of Aditya-deva (Sun-god) and distributed in charity precious things and clothing to half the amount of the previous day.

The third day they installed the image of Isvara-deva and distributed gifts as on the day before.

The fourth day they gave gifts to 10,000 Buddhist Bhikkhus, each receiving 100 pieces of gold, one pearl, one cotton garment, various drinks and meats, flowers and perfumes.

For the next twenty days gifts were bestowed upon the Brahmanas.

For the next ten days alms were bestowed upon those who came from a distance to ask for charity.

For the next month gifts were made to the poor, the orphans and the destitute.

By this time the accumulation of five years was exhausted. Except the horses, elephants, and military accountsments, which were necessary for maintaining order and protecting the royal estate, nothing remained. The king even freely gave away his gems and goods, his clothing and necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, chaplets, neck-jewel and bright head-jewels.

All being given away, he begged from his sister an ordinary second-hand garment, and having put it on, he paid worship to the

Buddhas of the ten regions, and exulted with joy with his hands closed in adoration.

This ceremony being over the assembled kings severally distributed among the people their money and treasure for the purpose of redeeming the royal necklaces, head-jewels, court vestments, etc., and restored them to the king; and then after a few days these same things were again given away in charity, as before."

Thus, finished the remarkable ceremony which emperor Harshavardhana performed after the example of his ancestors, at the end of every five years. As he informed the Chinese pilgrim, this was the sixth of its kind during his reign. Shortly after this ceremony Hiuen Tsang returned home and the emperor took all possible steps to facilitate the journey.

Harshavardhana evidently knew a great deal of China even before he met Hiuen Tsang, and in 641 A.D. sent an envoy to the Chinese emperor, who also sent an envoy in return. Soon after his meeting with Hiuen Tsang Harsha sent a Brahmana envoy to the Chinese emperor who sent a second mission in 643 A.D. Shortly after Hiuen Tsang's return to China, and probably as a result of the detailed report submitted by him, the Chinese emperor sent a third mission under Wang-hiuen-tse. This mission left China in 646, but when it arrived in India, Harshavardhana was no more. The great emperor died at the end of 646 or at the beginning of 647 A.D.

Harshavardhana does not appear to have left any heir to his throne which was usurped after his death by his minister Arjuna or Arunasva. A curious story is related in Chinese books of a fight between Arjuna and Wang-hiuen-tse. Arjuna is said to have plundered the property of the mission led by the latter, and killed some of its escorts, upon which Wang-hiuen-tse fled to Tibet. The king of Tibet, who was married to a Chinese as well as a Nepalese princess, helped him with troops, and so did Nepal. With these he came back, defeated Arjuna, and by dint of several victories conquered a considerable territory in Indian plains. It is difficult to estimate the historical value of this somewhat strange episode, and in any case the truth of the details may be doubted.

**North India from c. 650 A.D. to c. 800 A.D.**

Amid the confusion which followed the death of Harshavardhana his great empire passed away without leaving any trace behind. The futile attempts of his minister to govern the kingdom, and the strange Chinese expedition which his own folly had invited, have been referred to above. The victorious Chinese army which dealt the death-blow to the empire is said to have received substantial aid from Bhaskara-varman king of Kamarupa or Assam valley, and there is good evidence that he played an important part in Indian politics about that time.

**Kamarupa**

The ancient kingdom of Kamarupa generally remained outside the currents of Indian history. It does not appear to have been included in the Maurya empire, nor, so far as we know, had it any political relations with other early kingdoms. While the rest of India was convulsed by the upheaval of new religious sects, Kamarupa retained the Brahmanical religion to the last.

The kings of Kamarupa traced their descent from Naraka, the son of Vishnu, and Naraka's son was the great epic hero Bhagadatta. But the earliest historical dynasty is undoubtedly that founded by Pushya-varman early in the fourth century A.D. the first-six kings of this dynasty acknowledged the supremacy of the Guptas, but perhaps the seventh king, who claims to have performed two horse-sacrifices, threw off the yoke. Under the next king Bhuti-varman who flourished about the middle of the 6th century A.D., Kamarupa became a powerful kingdom. It included the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and Sylhet, and extended to the west as far as the Karatoya river which continued to be the traditional boundary of Kamarupa for a long time. The successors of Bhuti-varman came into conflict with the later Guptas who once advanced up to the Brahmaputra, but both sides claimed victory.

Bhaskara-varman, fourth indescendent from Bhuti-varman, ascended the throne towards the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century A.D. He sent an ambassador to Harshavardhana, immediately after the latter's accession, with a view to establish friendly relations between the two kingdoms. It is not difficult to divine the real object of this embassy, if we remember the height of power to which the kingdom of Bengal was raised about this time by Sasanka. The king

of Kamarupa dreaded the power of this neighbour, and tried to secure his position by availing himself of the enmity which had sprung up between Sasanka and the Lord of Thaneswar. There was thus the combination of Thaneswar, Kanauj and Kamarupa against that of Bengal and Malwa—with what results we have already seen? Bhaskara-varman must have realised, when it was too late, the consequences of alliance between unequal powers. For, thought after the removal of the dreaded rival by the death of Sasanka the latter's kingdom was divided between the two allies, Bhaskara-varman soon came to be looked upon by Harsha more as a feudatory vassal than an equal ally. He was not only forced to send the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang to Harshavardhana at the point of bayonet, but had also to attend the pompous ceremonies at Kanauj and Allahabad alongwith other vassal states of the Kanauj empire. No wonder that he fed fat his grudge by aiding the Chinese expedition against the successor of Harshavardhana on the throne of Kanauj. He was, however, too shrewd to lend this aid for nothing, and when the strange episode was over, he made himself master of Eastern India. He pitched his victorious camp in the capital of his late rival Sasanka, and thus increased the power and prestige of the kingdom of Kamarupa to an extent never dreamt of before.

But the greatness of the family did not last long. Bhaskara varman's kingdom was shortly after overthrown by a barbarian, Salastambha by name, and Kamarupa passed under the Mlechchha rule.

### **Later Guptas**

The next power to rise into importance were the Later Guptas. It has been already related how this dynasty was founded at the break-up of the Gupta empire. Mahasenagupta, the fifth king of this line, defeated Susthita-varman, the father of Bhaskara-varman, on the bank of the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra). But later in life he was visited by a great calamity, the exact nature of which is not known. He seems to have lost his life and his kingdom, and his two sons Kumara-gupta and Madhava-gupta took refuge in Thaneswar whose king Prabhakara-varadhan was his near relation. The two young princes became great friends of Rajya-vardhana and Harsha-vardhana. Evidently with the help of the latter Madhava-gupta became king of Magadha. About 675 A.D. Adityasena, son of Madhava-gupta, gained sufficient power and prestige to justify the assumption of imperial titles. Under him and his three successors, Deva-gupta, Vishnu-gupta and Jivita-gupta, who all



assumed imperial titles, the kingdom of Magadha occupied the position of supremacy in Eastern India.

### **Yasovarman**

But once more Kanauj came to be the dominant power in North India. The history of this kingdom, since the abortive attempt of the minister of Harsha to maintain his master's empire, is obscure in the extreme. In the beginning of the eighth century A.D., however, we find a very powerful monarch on the throne of Kanyakubja. This was Yasovarman, another military adventurer of the type of Yasodharman and Sasanka. He was not only a great conqueror but also a patron of poets. Bhababhuti, the sweet nightingale of Sanskrit literature, lived in his court, and as long as Sanskrit language survives, Yasovarman's name will remain bound up with one of its greatest poets. Other poets of lesser renown also graced his court, among whom the name of Vakpati stands pre-eminent. This poet sought to immortalise his patron king by describing his exploits in a Prakrit poem of unusual merit, called *Gaudavaho* or the 'Slaying of the king of Gauda'. We learn from this poem that the king of Gauda, probably Jivita-gupta II, the great grandson of Adityasena, ruled over extensive territories, including Magadha, but his capacity was not equal to the task of governing such a vast kingdom. On the approach of Yasovarman he took fright and fled, apparently leaving Magadha in possession of the victor. The nobility of Bengal, were, however better than their master, and next year they forced their cowardly king to face the invader. Vakpati describes with eloquence the brave fight put up by the Bengali heroes. But all the same the battle ended in their defeat and the death of their king, and Yasovarman overran the whole of Bengal up to the seashore.

Yasovarman is next said to have proceeded in his career of conquest towards the south, and then, marching along the Narmada towards the west, reached the Western Ghats. Thence he moved northwards and conquered Marudesa (Rajputana) and Srikantha (Thaneswar), and after visiting the Himalaya mountains returned to his capital at Kanauj.

How far this conventional description of conquest may be regarded as historically true it is difficult to say, but Yasovarman was unquestionably the most powerful king about this time. He maintained diplomatic relations with the great Chinese emperor. In the year 731

A.D. he sent his minister to the Chinese court, but, neither the object nor the result of the mission is known to us. We know, however, that in alliance with Lalitaditya, king of Kashmir, he led a campaign against the Tibetans, defeated them and blocked the passes leading to that mountainous territory. As the Chinese emperor was then engaged in hostilities with the Tibetans, Yasovarman probably sought to make a common cause against his northern foe. The enmity between Yasovarman and the Tibetans is easily explained when we remember how they had taken part in Indian politics and already conquered Nepal. Moreover, the Tibetan king had helped Wang-hiuen-tse to successfully defy the power of Kanauj and plunder the rich cities of India shortly after the death of Harshavardhana. It is, however, not also unlikely that Yasovarman wanted to make a common cause with China against the growing power of the Arabs.

Yasovarman ruled with glory and splendour till about 740 A.D., when his ambitious ally Lalitaditya, king of Kashmir, grew jealous of him, and sought to play the imperial role at his expense. Hostilities broke out on the most flimsy pretext, and a protracted struggle followed, ending in the defeat and perhaps also death of Yasovarman, and the absorption of his kingdom in the growing empire of Kashmir.

## Kashmir

The early history of the kingdom of Kashmir is full of legendary traditions, but not long before the middle of seventh century A.D., Durlabha-varḍhana, a chief of obscure origin, obtained the throne by marrying the daughter of the late king and founded the famous royal dynasty known as the Karkota. It was during his reign that Hiuen Tsang visited Kashmir. As the pilgrim informs us, Durlabha-varḍhana ruled not only over Kashmir proper, but a part of the Northwestern Punjab as well. He was followed by his son Pratapaditya II who ruled with moderation and justice, and built the town of Pratapapura. He was succeeded by his three sons. The eldest Chandrapida, who was powerful enough to be recognised as king by the emperor of China in 720 A.D., was renowned for his piety and justice. It is recorded in Kathana's *Rajatarangini*, which henceforth forms a valuable source for the detailed history of Kashmir, that when the king began to build a temple, a leather-tanner refused to give up his hut which lay on the site. When the matter was reported to the king, he considered his own officers to be at fault, not the tanner. "Stop the building," he cried out, or "have

it erected elsewhere". The tanner himself came to the king and represented : "Since my birth this hut has been to me like a mother, witness of good and evil days. I cannot bear to see it pulled down today." Still he agreed to give up his hut "if His Majesty would come to his dwelling and ask for it in accordance with propriety." As soon as the king heard this, he went to his home and bought up the hut with money. The reign of this king was full of just acts like this, and he may almost be said to have fallen a martyr to them. Once he punished a Brahmana who had secretly murdered another Brahmana by means of witchcraft. The former felt deep wrath over his punishment and was instigated by the king's younger brother Tarapida to use his witchcraft against the king. Thus died the noble king Chandrapida after a reign of eight years and a half. The fratricide Tarapida then ascended the throne. His inglorious rule of four years was full of cruel and bloody deeds. He was followed by his younger brother Lalitaditya Muktapida, the greatest king of the dynasty.

Lalitaditya ascended the throne about 724 A.D. He was 'eager for conquests and passed his life chiefly on expeditions.' As already related, he entered into an alliance with Yasovarman and defeated the Tibetans. Like Yasovarman, and probably for similar reasons, he sent a diplomatic mission to the Chinese emperor in order to induce him to make a common cause against the Tibetans. The mission was received with honour by the emperor who recognised the king of Kashmir as his royal ally, but no military assistance was sent from China. But even unaided, Lalitaditya succeeded in defeating not only the Tibetans but also the mountainous tribes on the north and northwestern frontier of his kingdom, such as the Dards, Kambojas and Turks.

But the most important of the expeditions of Lalitaditya was the against Yasovarman to which reference has already been made. By that victory Lalitaditya not only made himself master of Kanauj, but also acquired the theoretical right of suzerainty over the vast conquests of his late rivals. In order to effectively assert these rights, Lalitaditya marched towards the east and overran Magadha, Gauda, Kamarupa and Kalinga. He then marched against the Chalukyas of the south, but it is difficult to ascertain how far he had penetrated into the Deccan and the amount of success he achieved in this direction. He next seems to have conquered Malwa and Gujarat, and defeated the Arabs of Sindh, somewhere near the border of his country. These extensive conquests

made the kingdom of Kashmir, for the time being, the most powerful empire that India had seen since the days of the Guptas. No wonder that for centuries the Kashmirians celebrated the victories of the great emperor whom, with pardonable exaggeration, they chose to call the universal monarch.

Lalitaditya lavished the great resources of this mighty empire in adorning his kingdom with beautiful towns, and decorating the towns with fine buildings, monasteries, temples, and images of gods. The most famous of his works is the Martanda temple, ruins of which still form "the most striking remains which have survived of the ancient architecture of Kashmir."

Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*, has drawn a magnificent picture of this celebrated king. But two incidents have left an indelible stain on the character of this great emperor. Once in a fit of drunkenness he ordered the town of Pravarapura to be burnt down, though afterwards he repented of it and was glad to find that the ministers had disobeyed his orders. The second case was more serious. He summoned the king of Gauda (Bengal) to Kashmir and promised him safe-conduct, making the image of Vishnu Parihasakesava the surety for his promise. All the same he had the king killed by assassins. It is as difficult to find any motive for this foul treachery as to condone it in any way. The sequel of this story is interesting in the extreme. A few devoted followers of the murdered king undertook the long journey from Bengal to Kashmir, and invested the temple of the god who had been made the surety. The priests closed the gates, but they were forced open. The Bengali heroes reached the statue of Vishnu Ramasvamin, and mistaking it for that of Parihasakesava, overturned it and broke it into pieces, while they were all being cut up by the Kashmirian soldiers who had just arrived from the capital. Kalhana pays a just tribute to the heroism of the small but devoted band of Gauda. "What of the long journey which had to be accomplished, and what of the devotion for the dead lord? Even the creator cannot achieve what the Gauda did on that occasion. Even to this day the temple of Ramasvamin is seen empty, whereas, the world is filled with the fame of the Gauda heroes."

Lalitaditya died about 760 A.D. after a reign of thirty-six years. He was followed by a succession of weak kings who were unable to maintain the power and prestige of the family. One among them, Jayapida, fifth in descent from Lalitaditya, seems to have made a serious

attempt to regain the lost supremacy but no conspicuous success attended his efforts.

While the Kashmirians were gradually receding into the background two new powers arose in Northern India that were destined to play the imperial role with far greater success. These were the Palas and the Gurjaras the story of whose rise, growth and decay carries us almost to the end of the period of Hindu supremacy. Indeed, from the close of Lalitaditya's reign to the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni the history of Northern India is chiefly the history of these two mighty powers.

### **The Gurjaras**

The early history of the Gurjaras, the ancestors of the modern Gujars, is shrouded in mystery. It is generally held that they entered India at a comparatively late period, probably along with the Hunas, towards the close of the fifth century A.D. Cities and districts named after the Gurjaras mark the successive stages of their advance through the Punjab to Jodhpur in the heart of Rajputana. There, to the west of the Aravalli hills, they formed their main settlements for which the region was long known as Gurjaratra, the earlier form of Gujarat, before it came to be called Rajputana, early in the Muslim period. Prabhakara-var dhana, the king of Thaneswar, waged wars against them, but apparently without success, for they ruled over an independent kingdom even when Harsha-var dhana founded his empire in Northern India. The ruling family belonged to the Pratihara clan, and hence the royal dynasty is known in history as the Gurjara-Pratihara. It appears that the Gurjaras proceeded from their main settlements at Rajputana further towards the east and south and one branch dynasty was ruling at Broach, and another at Malwa.

### **The Arab Conquest of Sindh**

The Gurjara-Pratiharas had been settled in Rajputana for a century and a half when a formidable rival appeared in the west. These were the Arabs who had imbibed along with their new religion a national consciousness and a warlike spirit from the Prophet Muhammad. Their energetic and enthusiastic nature bordering on fanaticism was thoroughly roused, and they rushed forth to spread the new religion and carry on military conquests all over the world. Verily

they wrought wonders. Syria and Egypt were conquered within six years of the death of the Prophet; Northern coast of Africa, Spain, and Persia fell in quick succession; and before a century had elapsed, the empire of the Caliphs, as the successors of the Prophet were called, extended from the Loire in the heart of France to the Oxus and Kabul rivers.

Such was the formidable people who had reached the frontiers of India, and cast longing eyes on her fair plains and cities. They made several plundering raids into India both by land and sea, but could not gain any important success till 712 A.D. About this time the king of Ceylon sent to Hajjaj, the Governor of Iraq, some women who were born in his country as Muslims, their fathers, who were merchants, having died. But the ship in which they were sailing was captured by the pirates of Debal, a seaport of Sindh. Hajjaj thereupon wrote to Dahar, king of Sindh, to set the women free, but Dahar pleaded inability, saying 'I have no control over the pirates who captured them.' Hajjaj regarded this as the *casus belli* against Sindh, and determined to make renewed effort on a large scale for conquering a country which had so long defied the arms of Islam. The Caliph was at first unwilling to sanction the risky expedition, but ultimately gave his consent at the importunities of Hajjaj. Hajjaj thereupon sent 'Ubaidallah to raid Debal, but he was defeated and killed. The a second expedition was sent by way of sea from Oman under Budail. Budail got reinforcements from Muhammad ibn-Harun and marched towards Debal. Dahar, on hearing the news, sent a force under his son Jaisimha to protect Debal. A pitched battle ensued, which lasted the whole day. At the end the Muslim army was routed and Budail was killed.

Hajjaj then made elaborate preparations for the invasion of Sindh, after obtaining necessary permission from the Caliph Walid. He appointed his nephew and son-in-law Muhammad Ibn Qasim as commander of the expedition, and provided him with soldiers, arms and ammunitions on a most lavish scale. He asked for and obtained from the Caliph the services of 6000 Syrian soldiers fully armed. The petty kingdom of Sindh was hardly in a position to offer any effective resistance to this vast and well-organised army. But still Dahar opposed a brave resistance. Muhammad first conquered Debal, Nerun, Siwistan and a few other strongholds and according to *Chachnama*, treachery, specially of the Buddhists, played no small part in these campaigns. Mohammed then met Dahar and his main army before the fort of Raor.

Dahar fought bravely for two days but an unfortunate incident practically decided the fate of this battle. The Muslim army was routed and victory inclined to the side of Dahar when his elephant, being wounded, rushed away from the battlefield, and the disappearance of the king led to so great a panic and confusion, that although the king, himself wounded, returned to the field shortly after, order could by no means be restored. Dahar fought with desperate courage and gallantly fell fighting in the midst of his enemies.

The widowed queen collected the remains of the army and defended the fort with stubborn courage till provisions failed. Then followed a strange scene, a precursor of many others in India but without any parallel in the history of the world, both ancient and modern. Faced with the alternatives of death or dishonour the men and women of the capital chose the former. A big fire was kindled in the courtyard. The women gaily decorated themselves, took leave of their husbands and other relations, and then with joyous face threw themselves and their children into the blazing flame. The men silently watched the terrible scene till the fire had devoured all that was dear and near unto them in this world; then they threw the gates wide open, and, sword in hand, rushed into the midst of the enemy. The Muhammedan soldiers long remembered the day when the handful of Indians perished to a man, after having fought with the desperate courage which certain death never fails to inspire. When the victorious Muhammedan general made his triumphal entry into the capital, the dying embers of the flame told him the awful tale of heroic sacrifice, known as Jauhar.

Jaisimha, the son of Dahar, now strongly fortified Bahmanabad and the capital city of Alor, and himself moved with an army to harass the enemy and cut off its supplies. Muhammad besieged Brahmanabad. 'Every day the besieged came out and offered battle and fierce fight continued from morning till evening.' But though the besieged fought valiantly for six months, some leading citizens betrayed the fort to the Muslim general, who then laid siege to Alor. The capital city was defended for sometime, by Fofi, another son of Dahar, and when the residents wanted to make peace with Muhammad, he withdrew with his forces. After the submission of Alor and the conquest of a few more forts, Muhammad proceeded to Multan. The people offered a brave resistance for two months, when a traitor pointed out to Muhammad

the source of water-supply for the town, Muhammad cut it off the Multan was forced to surrender.

Shortly after this the death of Hajjaj in 714 A.D. and that of Caliph Walid in 715 A.D. brought in evil days for Muhammad. The new Caliph Sulaiman and his governor of Iraq were both great enemies of Hajjaj. Muhammad Ibn Qasim was recalled from India and put to death, alongwith several other adherents of Hajjaj.

According to *Chach-nama* Muhammad had proceeded from Multan to the frontiers of Kashmir and at the same time sent an expedition to Kanauj. It then relates the story how two virgin daughters of Dahar, who were sent as prisoners to the Caliph Walid, brought about the death of Muhammad Ibn Qasim by falsely accusing him of having outraged them before sending them to the Caliph. But this story is hardly credible.

Such was the beginning of the Arab domination in India. Surprise has often been felt why the victorious forces were satisfied with Sindh alone, and failed to carry their arms into the interior of India. Various theories have been put forth to explain why the 'conquerors' of the world stopped merely at the gates of India and even failed to retain what they had conquered. The real explanation is not, however, far to seek. It has been already related that Lalitaditya, the king of Kashmir, gained success against the Arab forces, and it is legitimate to suppose that the imperial forces of Kashmir checked their onward progress for the time being. Further, there is incontestable evidence that from the very beginning the Gurjaras stood as bulwarks of Indian defence against the vanguards of Islam. That there was no lack of desire on the part of the Arab government to extend their dominions into the interior of India is proved by the military expeditions into the interior of India is proved by the military expeditions they sent for the purpose from time to time. The most formidable of these was despatched about 725 A.D., when the Muhammedans overran Cutch, Kathiawar Peninsula, Northern Gujarat and Southern Rajputana, and probably even advanced as far as Malwa. It appeared as if the whole of Northern and Southern India would fall within their grasp. But Northern India was saved by a chief of the Gurjara-Pratihara clan, and the gates of the Deccan were successfully defended by the forces of the Chalukya king of Badami led by his viceroy named Avanijanasraya Pulakesiraja who received



from his grateful sovereign the proud titles of "Solid pillar of Dakshinapatha" and "repeller of the unrepellable".

The Pratihara chief who had thus saved Northern India was Nagabhata, the ruler of Avanti, the present Malwa, in the first half of the eighth century. His power and prestige must have been considerably increased by his great history over the Arabs, and he extended his kingdom by incorporating many of the smaller principalities overrun by them. He was succeeded by his two nephews Kakkuka and Devaraja, and then came Vatsaraja, the son of the last named king. Vatsaraja, who is known to have been ruling in 783 A.D., was a very powerful ruler, and consolidated the Pratihara dominion by extensive conquests in Northern India. He even claims to have easily defeated the king of Gauda or Bengal. He had thus well nigh established unquestioned supremacy over the greater part of Northern India when an unforeseen event deprived him of the great prize almost within his grasp. Before, however, proceeding to describe this incident it will be well to take note of the condition of Bengal which thus fell an easy prey to the Pratihara king.

### **The Rise of the Palas**

After the death of Sasanka, Bengal had lost all political solidarity. As we have seen above, it was conquered by Harshavardhana as well as Bhaskara-varman of Kamarupa. At the beginning of the eighth century, a king of the Saila dynasty made himself master of Paundra or Northern Bengal, and this was followed by the invasions of Yasovarman and Lalitaditya as has been recorded above. About the middle of the eighth century, a king named Harsha, probably of Kamarupa, conquered the country.

These successive foreign invasions brought about complete anarchy and confusion throughout the kingdom. There was no central authority and each landlord established an independent principality like the feudal barons of Middle Ages. Might was Gwalior, sometime before 977 A.D. As Gopagiri was in possession of the Chandellas about this time, it appears that Vajradaman had defeated both the Chandella king Dhanga and his Pratihara overlord who also joined him in defending that this stronghold. Probably after this ignominious defeat Dhanga shook off even the nominal suzerainty of the Pratiharas.

The causes which led to the downfall of Northern India must be, and indeed are, different from those which led to the downfall of Punjab. In the Punjab, there were no Rajput kingdoms. Punjab, as stated before, was always ruled from outside, by Sind, by Kashmir, by Kabul. Northern India was always ruled by Hindu and local kings. Punjab was usually the land of foreign invasions and of foreign rule. Northern India had always defeated and driven out foreign invaders. Alexander did not cross the Sutlej at all. Menander came as far as Ayodhya but was eventually driven out by Pushpamitra. The Sakas came as far as Mathura but were driven away by Vikramaditya. The Kushans and the Huns indeed ruled rather long in the Western part of Northern India but they were driven away by Skandagupta of Patna, by Vishnuvardhana of Mandsaur and finally by Pratapavardhana of Thanesar. From 600 A.D. down to 1000 A.D. there were no foreign invasions. Mahmud indeed conquered Rajyapal and imposed a tribute on Northern India but the Gahadavalas soon drove out the foreign foe and stopped the tribute, while Rajyapala had even been killed by the Chandellas and Kachhwahas for submitting to Mohammedan yoke. In short the Aryan kings of Northern India had always held their own against foreign invaders. The Rajput kingly families of the Hindu period were unquestionably most heroic and did not brook submission. Why did they fall before Shihabuddin Ghori? There could be no lack of armies or of capable generals. Indeed, Prithviraja was the greatest warrior put forward by the indomitable Chauhans to oppose the Mohammedan onslaught. He had actually defeated four kings successively. He held up the flood of Mohammedan conquest like a strong bund. Strangely enough as soon as the bund gave way, the flood rushed over the whole of Northern India and uprooted all the Rajput kingdoms within the course of twenty-five years. Why did the heroic Rajput kingly families, like the Chauhans and the Rathods, the Chandellas and the Paramaras, the Solankhis and the Haihayas succumb and why did Northern India fall so completely as never to rise again ?

There was no superiority of physique or valour in favour of the Mohammedan combatants. The Rajputs were as hardy, powerful or heroic as the Turks and Afghans who conquered them. There was no difference of weapons. Neither the Afghans nor the Rajputs had fire-arms. Both fought with the same weapons, the sword the lance and the arrow. Both had elephants in perhaps equal numbers. The Moghuls

indeed conquered the Rajputs by the use of cannon; and so did the Marathas under Scindia. As stated already, before the scientific weapons of destruction of the western nations, India was bound to fall. But in the days of Shihabuddin Ghorî, neither side used fire-arms, though Firîshhta and Chand Bardai by anachronism mention their use.

It cannot be alleged that the religious fervour actuating Shihabuddin and his Mohammedan was stronger than that actuating the Rajputs. Although Mohammedan historians describe the former as making a religious war, Shihabuddin was fighting for conquest of territory and not for extending religion. Indeed, we find that conversion of the people to Mohammedanism was not his motive in conquering Northern India, and conversions did not take place on a large scale in Northern India for reasons which we will presently see. On the other hand, the Rajputs and the Hindus of Northern India were actuated by a more fervent religious zeal than the inhabitants of the Punjab. As stated before, religious zeal in the Punjab has always been weak; but the land of the Sarasvati, the Jamuna and the Ganges has always been the stronghold of Hinduism being its birthplace. We, therefore, think that the impelling force of religion was equally strong on either side.

The foremost cause which is usually and properly assigned to the fall of the Rajputs is their internecine fighting. The Rajput kingly families always fought amongst themselves not so much for extension of territory as for establishment of superiority. At this very time we find Prithviraj attacking his three great neighbouring kings of Gujarat, Bundelkhand and U.P. These fights were always tough fights as between European nations and doughty warriors on both sides always fell in great numbers. The fighting strength of all the four powerful kingdoms, *i.e.* of the Chauhans, the Rathods, the Chandellas and the Solankhis was thus reduced and each fell when fighting singly and separately against the strong common foe. Internecine warfare has always been the bane of the Rajputs. Though the Rajputs always neglected artillery and were, therefore, always weak in modern times, they could even then have driven out the Moghuls, if only they had combined, as Manuchi distinctly states in his memoirs and they could have withstood even the Marathas, though not the English, for the Maratha, artillery was in the hands of Europeans. Against Shihabuddin whose ambition was threatening India, of which the Rajputs must have had ample knowledge from informants, the Rajputs should have stayed their

quarrels and combined. They did not stop their fights even against the common impending danger and they consequently were all destroyed.

The condition of India at this time resembled that of Germany at the end of the eighteenth century. Germany was divided at that time into several small but strong kingdoms the Ruler in each of which aspired to the imposing dignity of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and consequently tried to humble though not destroy the others. In the same way in India each Rajput king aspired to being called Chakravartin or emperor and for that end tried to conquer other kings without attempting to annex his kingdom. Thus, while the power of both was lessened, the conqueror gained no strength from increase of resources or dominion. Bhoja of Malwa for example fought with and humbled other Rajput kings and was called Malava Chakravartin. Karna of Chedi followed his example. And Kumarapala attempted to obtain the same honour. The rivalry between the Gahadavalas and the Chauhans lasted for nearly thirty years, between Vijayachandra and Vigrahapala and Jaichand and Prithviraj and weakened both. As the *Rasa* relates, ninety out of a hundred of Prithviraja's samantas fell in his conflict with Jayachand in carrying off Sanyogita. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Rajput kingly families fell before Shihabuddin as the Germanic states severally fell before Napoleon.

But while Germany was never finally conquered and subjected to foreign domination, Northern India was laid prostrate for all time. We have, therefore, really to find out the reason why even after temporary conquest as the natural consequence of defeat in battle, Northern India could not regain its feet and make itself free. The cause of this, in our view, lay in the rigidification of caste which took place about this time. We will show in our General Survey Book how caste which was fluid in the beginning of this sub-period became rigid by the end of the 12th century and the modern rigid caste system of India with its intricacies and its numberless subsections inside the main castes was evolved. While Kshatriyas married in previous times Vaisya wives and Brahmins married Kshatriya and Vaisya wives and often *vice versa*, each caste and subcaste now confined marriage and even food to itself. The social sympathy which existed previously among the various sections of the Hindu people was gone and it was replaced by a feeling of aloofness and even aversion.

But the most injurious result of this rigidification of caste was the vast diminution in the fighting strength of kingdoms. Even now this evil of the caste system in India is not adequately realised. It is often wondered how a nation consisting of 33 crores of inhabitants can be ruled by a nation of four crores. But it must be remembered that the fighting people in India scarcely number four crores while the whole British nation of four crores is the fighting reserve of Britain. In India, excepting the Punjab, the people are divided firstly by race into Aryans and Dravidians and secondly by caste into fighters and non-fighters. The Dravidian section of the Indian population is nearly more than one half and chiefly consists of non-fighters. In the Aryan section of the population again, only the Kshatriyas are by heredity and present occupation inclined to fight. The result is that in India about 10 per cent of the population is fit and disposed to fight, while the remaining 90 per cent by nature and heredity is not fit to fight and is, therefore, ready to accept the role of any strong nation which happens to be successful. As we will explain elsewhere, the idea of a nation did not develop in India and the people as a whole never thought of opposing foreign conquest. Especially, at this time by the rigidification of caste the number of those who fought for independence was owing to internecine fighting limited and as soon as these *viz.* the Rajputs fell, the country as a whole submitted without demur to the foreign yoke.

This baneful effect of a rigid caste system, wherein the number of those who fight for the independence of the community becomes limited, was seen by the ancient law-givers and they attempted to remedy it by laying it down that though ordinarily it is the duty of the Kshatriyas to take up arms, it was yet the duty of all the three higher *varnas* to take up arms when religion was threatened and religion or Dharma, according to the Hindu notion, included politics and imposition of the yoke of a foreign people and religion was certainly a danger to religion. But where the people, are for generations, bred up in professions which are docile and in a spirit of submission, it is impossible to expect them to suddenly become fighters. Indeed, as stated before, when Shihabuddin conquered Kanauj, the *rais* and landholders came forward and tendered submission. Moreover, it must be noted that the population of Northern India is predominantly Dravidian, unlike the Punjab. It is even now so, the total number of Kshatriyas in U.P. is remarkably small. While, therefore, Shihabuddin Ghori could raise an army from the whole of the overflowing population of the Punjab, of Afghanistan and of Turkestan,

the Rajputs could not raise large armies in India nor would the people offer resistance as a whole to foreign yoke. It may be noted that in western countries at the present day the whole population of a country at the present ground for an army fighting for the nation's existence. Germany in the recent war could place in the field nearly 70 lakhs of soldiers and so could France and England. And the national sentiment is so strong in the west that the whole country takes the greatest interest in the national struggle. The condition of Northern India at this time was exactly the opposite. The Kshatriya population alone was the recruiting ground; it is indeed true that some Brâhmins and Vaisyas did fight even at that time, but these exceptions prove the rule *viz.* that the Brahmins and the Vaisyas then, as now, were as a rule unwilling and even unfitted to take up arms. The case was different during the days of the Guptas and the Vardhanas, of Dahir and Lalliya. Secondly, the people as a whole took no interest in the national struggle and without demur offered their submission to the foreign yoke, especially because, as we shall presently show, the Mohammedan rulers did not adopt any coercive measures for the spread of their religion.

Many of the remnants of the chivalrous, independence-loving Rajputs retired to the deserts and hills of Rajputana, or the ravines of the Chambal and the Jumna and other, retired tracts and there preserved their independence, thus leaving Northern India in general and the *Madhya-desa* in particular, all the more helpless. Northern India, therefore, fell prostrate never to rise, because there was no national resistance. This will explain how while in Europe even small nations have successfully resisted attempts to enslave them, in India large countries like the Kanauj kingdom fell *finally* before the Mohammedans. These countries or kingdoms were large enough even singly to oppose successfully any Mohammedan conqueror. But the reality is that there was no national resistance and the resistance offered by the Rajputs was unavailing owing to their being outnumbered by reason of rigidity of caste. It is not a mere matter of accident that Sobieski the greatest leader of the Poles was able to finally stop the onward rush of the Turks at Vienna. The Poles were more heroic than the Greeks, no doubt, but the Poles fought as a nation and hence succeeded. In Northern India unfortunately, both Prithviraj and Jaichand were defeated; but if the people had resisted as a whole, Northern India could not have been finally subdued by the Mohammedans.

The efficacy and the necessity of national resistance, was first realised in India, in our view, by Shivaji, under the inspiration of whose spirit Maharashtra resisted as a nation and fought against Aurangzeb. The Marathas, meaning thereby Kshatriyas, Brahmins and the common people or Sudras combined and fought as a man in the days of Rajaram and rose superior even to the whole combined power of the Moghul empire with which Aurangzeb in vain strove to crush them. The Marathas of the days of Shivaji and Rajaram, alone in Indian history, offered national resistance and attained and preserved independence. They alone in Indian history verified the maxim laid down in western politics that no power however great can crush the independence of a people, however small if they resist as a nation. India naturally could not realise the necessity of national unity when its kingdoms were ruled by Hindu kings of whatever clan. The Marathas first realised it after three centuries of Mohammedan rule. The Sikhs followed them with their religious conscription. The Indian people under English rule must realise the necessity of national effort if they are to attain Swaraj or political freedom.

The message of history for the future, therefore, is that not only the Rajputs should learn to confederate and unite, but the whole of the people of India and especially the Hindus whose caste system makes disunion their normal characteristic. It is not indeed possible to suggest that caste should be abolished. The evolution of the Hindu society for thousands of years has been developing caste and it would be impossible to induce the Hindus to give up caste. Moreover, the Rajputs have developed their highly chivalrous and heroic nature, through this very principle of heredity. Indeed, the preservation of caste purity of which the Rajputs take particular care has everything to recommend it. But the Rajputs not only of the east and the west but also of the north and the south, the Gurkhas, Dogras, the Bundelas and the Marathas must learn to unite on terms of absolute equality and more imperatively confederate for national uplift. But still, the Hindus, in spite of their caste distinctions must learn to confederate on terms of equality of status while preserving the independent growth of each main caste (though not of each subordinate subdivision which has come into being for fanciful reasons). The principle of confederation of independent units for political purposes was first thought out and practised by the American states and has now been followed by Germany. The confederation of Hindus, subdivided as they are, into independent

castes, is the real problem of the future as previous history teaches us, and it must be practicable to achieve it even if it be necessary to adopt for it, commensality of food and drink and of some religious worship. There is, and there should be, no idea in this confederation of the Hindus, of opposing or harassing the Mohammedan; for the confederation of Hindus and Mohammedan is also absolutely necessary for the political progress of the country. But it must be remembered that the Mohammedan are already a united and a strong community, and the confederation of Hindus and Mohammedans can only be achieved and made permanent if the Hindus also become a united and strong community.

To conclude the disunion among the Rajputs the fighting arm of India and the rigidity of caste by which 9/10 of the people were made incapable or unwilling to resist foreign domination were the two main causes which led to the permanent enslavement of Northern India.

### **Downfall of Northern India—Subsidiary Causes**

In the last section, we have given what appear to us to be the chief causes of the fall of the Rajput kingdoms of Northern India, viz. : first, the constant fighting among the several Rajput states and their consequent weakening and second, the rigidification of caste which made the several important sections of the people in each state, except the Rajputs, incapacitated and unwilling to fight. In this section we notice some subsidiary causes which contributed to the fall of these kingdoms, though these individually could not have led to that result. Most of the facts given here will have to be noticed again in our survey of the general condition of the country; but it is as well to mention them here separately.

1. One may first again mention the absence of the feeling of nationality in the people of all these states. We have already said that in India at this time, as elsewhere in Asia, there were kingdoms but no peopledoms. The people did not feel that the state was theirs and the king ought also to be theirs. The country belonged to the king and any one might be king whom God chose. Under this view of the state, the sentiment of nationality cannot arise, the virtue of patriotism. There was the sentiment of loyalty, no doubt, and you find in the Prithviraj Rasa that sentiment appealed to everywhere. To die for the master was the highest *dharmā* of the Rajput soldier. But when that master railed



and another master was substituted by the will of God, the soldier was ready to die for him also. Thus, we find even Kshatriya soldiers dying for Mohammedan kings and masters. This was doubly true of the common people who were not Rajputs *i.e.* of the caste whose duty it was to rule.

Though one essential of a state in its modern sense was indeed developing in India in the rise of separate modern languages and Gujarat, Rajputana, Antarbhed, Bengal, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Malyalam could now be considered as separate countries by reason of separate languages, *viz.* their modern vernaculars, this did not develop the feeling of nationality among the speakers of the same language for the above reason and in each of these countries or provinces, there were consequently several kingdoms which fought with one another. Why these did not coalesce, we shall discuss later on, but we may state here that the sameness of language did not develop the sentiment of nationality in these provinces in the absence of the other essential conditions which give rise to the feeling of nationality.

2. There being no sentiment of nationality, the ingress of foreigners was usually not objected to. Except in Kashmir and Tibet which had impregnable boundaries, the ingress of foreigners was not prohibited, was not even watched. Hence, Mohammedan came into the several kingdoms freely and often settled therein. Thus, we find them settled in Naharwala, in Cambay, in Sopara, in Maharashtra and even in the Kanauj kingdom.\* They even insisted on being governed by their own magistrates, as is evidenced by Mohammedan writers, as also by the expression Hanjamana-Nagara-Trivarga already noticed in Thana inscriptions. That the strength of states is impaired by the presence of foreigners is seen clearly by the modern states of the west which exercise strict watch over the ingress of foreigners. Indian states did not realise this or feel the necessity of strict watch over them owing to the absence of the feeling of nationality. Though there is no recorded evidence of it, one can imagine how the presence of Mohammedan in

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\* *The Benares Gazetteer* states that in the city of Benares there are Mohammedan Mchollas which are anterior in date of the final conquest of Benares by the Mohammedans according to tradition, though it is difficult to believe that Chandra or Govindachandra or even Jaichand could have allowed Mohammedans to settle in Benares. Perhaps they settled in the time of the subservient Pratiharas kings.

the several kingdoms must have contributed to their eventual subjugation.

3. Superstition sometimes contributes its quota to the fall of nations and superstition acted like a double-edged sword towards the fall of India. While the Mohammedan believed that victory was bound to come to them "for the judgement of God was upon those who were against him and could not be avoided," the Hindus thought that India was bound to be overrun by the Mlechchhas in the Kali age. Superstition has often acted thus upon the mind of peoples. The Aztecs of Mexico believed that they were destined to be conquered by men coming from the east. When the Goths and the Vandals overthrew the Roman Empire, the Christians thought that the end of the world was coming on as foretold in the Bible and made no opposition. In India too, though there is no recorded evidence of it, except in the case of Lakhnauti where the Tabakat records that king Lakshmanasena had been told that he would be conquered by a long-armed Turk the Hindus generally must have submitted to the new state of things through the superstitious belief that it was inevitable.

4. The maintenance of a strong and sufficient army is the first duty of every state. The Hindu states had probably neglected this duty at this time. The great reputation of India in this respect noted before had been lost by it at this time. The probability is that Hindu states did not at this time maintain standing armies as in the days of Harsha or Bhoja. The army consisted chiefly of the quotas furnished by the Samantas. Though not exactly alike, these Samantas were like barons in England, who maintained for the use of the state certain quotas of fighters, the expenses of the same being borne by the barons or Samantas from their fiefs. This is the same system as existed under the Moghuls viz., of Hazaris and Panch Hazaris. Prithviraj had probably no standing army of the state. He had probably only a small Huzur force. We know that the Peishwas, after the battle of Panipat, neglected to maintain a strong Huzur army, and the sagacious Ahalyabai expostulated often with Nana Fadnis for neglecting the Huzur Pathak. The quota supplied by Samantas cannot always be relied upon, either in respect of number or of efficiency. The standing army of Mahmud or Shihabuddin Ghori must have been a more reliable force than the armies composed of the forces of Samantas called together hastily by the Hindu kings. Samantas or military sardars are again not disposed

to fight stubbornly as there is a temptation to save themselves and their fiefs. We believe that the absence of sufficient standing armies in the Hindu states at this time strongly contributed to their eventual fall.

5. It may further be observed that Hindu intelligence neglected the study of the science of war as well as the science of the proper conception of the state. Brahmin and Kshatriya intelligence revelled more in this subperiod in the study of poetics than in the necessary study of more useful sciences. The distinctions of heroines in love and despair, the essentials of poetry, poetical blemishes and embellishments, and the figures of speech engaged the highest intelligence of the land and even kings devoted their attention to writing elaborate treatises on poetics and dramaturgy. These works, no doubt, prove the fineness of Hindu intellect, but it should have devoted itself to more important studies. The attention and affluence of kings were bestowed more upon court-poets than upon generals; the stage attracted them more than the camp. The minute study of poetics led to the deterioration of taste and morals and the increase of voluptuousness can be marked from the Karpura-Manjari of Rajasekhara to the Rambha Manjari of Nayachandra. The debasement of popular and kingly test will be apparent from the first verse of adoration adopted even in Kanauj for such ceremonious and meritorious documents as inscriptions of grants of villages to pious Brahmins. Indeed, luxury and voluptuousness were bound to overtake the people in this sub-period, since the last sub-period was the most prosperous period of Hindu history. Height of prosperity leads to decadence of morals and voluptuousness which undermine the physical and moral capacities of the people, as we see in the case of the Romans, the Arabs, the Moghuls and others and it need not be wondered that the Hindu kingdoms in the twelfth century became weak, by reason of the very prosperity and happiness they had enjoyed.

6. Lastly, we cannot conclude this short survey of the subsidiary causes of the downfall of Rajput kingdoms in Northern India without drawing the attention of the reader to the recrudescence during this sub-period of the Buddhistic sentiment of Ahimsa which, as we shall show in our chapter on religious survey is evidenced by the rise of new Vaishnavism and the great popularity, power, and progress of Jainism and of Lingayat and other sects during this period. Though the rise of Vaishnavism or the spread of Jainism or other sects cannot be assigned as a direct cause of the downfall of Northern India, as Buddhism can

be as a cause of the downfall of Sind, it cannot be denied that the dominance of the docile doctrine of Ahimsa throughout the Hindu society at this time made it inoffensive and weak. Most Brahmins whether Saiva or Vaishnava, and almost all Vaisyas Saiv, Vaishnava and Jain accepted at this time the non-slaughter of animals as a binding religious principle and gave up animal food altogether as we will show later on. The result was that with the exception of the Rajputs the whole Hindu mass became unfitted as well as unwilling to fight. This influence of food on the nature of people cannot be denied. The masses of Indian people in the several states excepting the Rajputs, (the Sudras generally following the Brahmins and Vaisyas through imitation as well as indigence) were like Indian elephants. In spite of its enormous size and strength, the elephant is by nature timid and inoffensive. The elephant's arm of offense, its trunk, is delicate and is easily slashed. The elephant is usually afraid to endanger its life and shrinks at the least display of fire. No doubt, it can be trained to fight and to courageously withstand fire. So also the vegetarian Hindu can be trained to fight and perform deeds of valour. But where there is no such training, both by nature being inoppressive are easily subdued and made to obey the master. There are no doubt examples of Brahmins and even Jain brave generals and soldiers in this sub-period, but the generality of the people being unaccustomed to fight and becoming by their food inaggressive and docile, when the Rajputs failed, all the Hindu kingdoms from the Sutlej to the Brahmaputra and from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas succumbed and almost willingly submitted to the Moslem yoke within the short period of a quarter of a century. The message of history of Hindus, especially those who have conscientious objection to a meat diet, is so to strengthen themselves by physical training and mental alertness as to enable them to take their share honourably in the internecine physical struggles of the human race which will never cease but will ever go on.

### **Ramification of Caste**

As stated in beginning of this volume, we have a very valuable guide for ascertaining in social condition of Hindu India at the outset of this sub-period, in Al-Beruni who wrote his book on India in 1030 A.D. Al-Beruni lived among the Hindus at Multan and elsewhere in the Punjab and was an accurate observer. But unfortunately, he sometimes mixes what he read in Hindu religious books which he

studied in the original, with what he saw and his observations, therefore, are not always as reliable as those of previous Arab writers quoted in our second volume. However, we begin the description of the social condition of India in this sub-period, with quoting what Al-Beruni says on subject of caste in his book on India? Fortunately, he was acquainted with Persian and Greek history and gives us facts from the west for comparison with Indian condition.

Al-Beruni shows that caste had developed in ancient times among the Persians, not to speak, of Greeks and Romans. "The ancient Chosroes had created great institutions of this kind (caste) which could not be broken through by the special merits of any individual nor by bribery. When Ardashir restored the Persian empire, he also restored the classes or castes in the following manner:

1. Knights and princes.
2. Monks, fire-priests and lawyers.
3. Physicians and astronomers and other men of science.
4. Husbandmen and artisans.

And within these classes there were subdivisions distinct from each other, like the species within a genus. The Hindus have also institutions of this kind. We, Moslems, consider all men equal except in piety and this is an obstacle which prevents understanding between us and the Hindus.

# 8

## Administration in South India

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From the close of the 3rd cent. A.D. the history of South India remains very obscure until about the sixth century. From that period onwards we can trace it in detail, practically without any break. During the next three hundred years, *i.e.* from 6th to 9th century A.D., we find the Pallavas and the Pandyas on two sides of the Kaveri as the dominant powers in the south, the triangular fight between these two and the Chalukyas or the Rashtrakutas constituting the chief feature in the political history of the period. The Cholas, destined to be the greatest imperial power in the south, hardly counted as a political power till they emerged from obscurity in the 9th century A.D. The Cheras of old and some new powers like Gangas and Kadambas played only a minor part and, like many petty principalities, transferred their allegiance from one suzerain power to another as best suited their convenience and opportunity.

### The Pallavas

After the fall of the Satavahanas the southwestern part of their empire, *i.e.*, the region round Banavasi or Vijayanti (Kanara Districts), was occupied by the Chutu family whose kings bore the title Satakarni and were probably allied to them. They, however, never grew very powerful and their rule was of short duration. The eastern region, to the south of the Krishna, passed into the hands of the Pallavas who ruled over Tondaimandalam, the region round the city of Kanchipuram (Conjeeveram) which was their capital.

The Pallavas are not referred to in the classical Tamil literature of the Sangam age, and are generally regarded as foreigners who immigrated into the Tamil land during the rule of the Satavahanas, probably as their governors or military officials. Some have even identified Pallava with Pahlava or Parthian. Others, however, take them to be an indigenous tribe, either identical with, or allied to the Kurumbas.

The names of some early Pallava rulers like Bimhavarman and Sivaskandavarman are known from a few copper-plate charters, written in Prakrit and probably belonging to the third century. A.D. All that we can definitely say about them is that they performed Brahmanical sacrifices and ruled over a well organised kingdom that covered the northern part of the peninsula, extending from sea to sea. Later than these were the kings, about eight in number, whose names are known from charters written in Sanskrit. Attempts have been made to arrange them in Chronological and genealogical order, though no theory has met with general acceptance. In general they may be placed between the fourth and sixth centuries A.D. Vishnugopa of Kanchi, defeated by Samudragupta, was certainly a Pallava ruler of this period.

With the reign of Simhavishnu during the last quarter of the sixth century A.D., we tread upon firm ground. It is interesting to note that the Pandyas also emerge from obscurity about the same time and their ruler Kadungon, like his contemporary Simhavishnu, is said to have begun his rule by putting down the Kalvars. It has been suggested that these semi-barbarous and anti-Brahmanical people were an important factor in South India till Simhavishnu and his contemporary Pandyan king Kadungon inaugurated a new era, both political and cultural, in this region.

Simhavishnu (c. 575-600 A.D.) is said to have seized the Chola country, and his dominions extended from the Krishna to the Kaveri. His son and successor Mahendravarman. (c. 600-630) was a versatile genius. He wrote some Sanskrit farces, introduced the practice of scooping entire temples out of solid rock, and was highly versed in music. But unfortunately he was involved in a war with the Chalukya king Pulakesi II who defeated him and wrested the northern provinces of his dominions.

The war, thus begun, continued so long as the Chalukyas ruled

in the Deccan and, after them, with the Rashtrakutas who supplanted them. Narasimhavarman I (A.D. 630-68), the son and successor of Mahendravarman, not only resisted successfully the renewed invasion of Pulakesi, but shortly took the aggressive. He advanced as far as Badami and occupied it after a siege, in course of which Pulakesi was defeated and lost his life (c. 642 A.D.).

Narasimhavarman is said to have defeated the Cholas, Cheras and Kalabhras. He gave shelter to a Ceylonese prince Manavarman and sent two naval expeditions to Ceylon to help him to secure the throne of that country. He was the most powerful king in the South and raised the power and prestige of the Pallavas to a height unknown before. The complete collapse of the Chalukya power and its restoration by Vikramaditya about 655 A.D. Vikramaditya is said to have defeated not only Narasimhavarman, but also his two successors, his son Mahendravarman II, and the latter's son Paramesvaravarman I. The Chalukya king, helped by the Gangas of Mysore and the Pandyas of the south, invaded the Pallava kingdom and Mahendravarman II (c. 688-70 A.D.) was probably defeated and killed, while resisting the invasion, somewhere in Mysore. But Paramesvaravarman I (c. 670-95 A.D.) though defeated by the Pandyas in the south, made a successful raid on Badami. Vikramaditya, in revenge, devastated the Pallava dominion and advanced as far as Uraiyr, near Trichinopoly, on the Kaveri. In a battle in this region, Paramesvara is said to have "made Vikramaditya, whose army consisted of several *lakhs*, take to flight, covered by a rag." Whatever, we may think of this, it was a decisive victory which forced the Chalukyas to retire, and there was a lull in the conflict between the two powers.

Narasimhavarman II (c. 695-722 A.D.), also known as Rajasimha, the son and successor of Paramesvaravarman, had thus a peaceful reign, and is chiefly known for his remarkable architectural activities which inaugurated the peculiar Dravidian style. Of the many temples built by him the most famous is the Rajasimhesvara or the Kailasanatha at Kanchi. The art of painting also flourished, and most probably the great Sanskrit author Dandin lived in his court. He also sent ambassadors to China in 720 A.D. and was highly honoured by the Chinese emperor who, curiously enough, also gave a honorary title to the Pallava army "which was to employed to chastise the Arabs and the Tibetans." The significance of this is not quite clear to us.



Paramesvaravarman II, the son and successor of Narasimhavarmān, had to face a Chalukya invasion, and even Kanchi, the capital city, was conquered by the enemies, who, however, soon retired.

Paramesvaravarman II died about 731 A.D. without leaving any issue, and Nandivarman II, a boy of 12, belonging to a collateral branch of the royal family, was elected king by the chief citizens of the state. The young king, known as Pallavamalla, enjoyed a long reign of sixty-five years or more. At the very beginning he was engaged in prolonged hostilities with the Pandya king Rajasimha I who took up the cause of a pretender to the Pallava throne. Both sides claim victory in a number of engagements and evidently the Pandyas did not achieve any conspicuous success. Nandivarman owed his success mainly to the loyal devotion and great ability of his general Udayachandra who also conquered for his lord some territories in the north by defeating a Nishada chief, tributary to the Eastern Chalukyas. In order to check the aggressive designs of the Pandyas, Nandivarman organized a confederacy against them with the rulers of Kongu and Kerala. But the Pandya king Jatila Parantaka defeated them, annexed the whole of Kongu, and even advanced into the Pallava dominions as far as the Pennar river. Thus, the efforts of Nandivarman miserably failed.

The Chalukya king Vikramaditya II, who had invaded the Pallava dominions and conquered Kanchi even while he was a crown prince, about 730 A.D., again defeated Nandivarman and occupied the capital city, but far from damaging it, returned to the temples the wealth that belonged to them. Later in Nandivarman's reign, the Chalukyas made another raid and took a rich booty. Sometime about 750 A.D. the Rashtrakuta Dantidurga, who had overthrown the Chalukya power, invaded Kanchi. In spite of all these defeats Nandivarman maintained his kingdom intact. He seems to have even defeated the Ganga king Sripurusha and conquered some territories from him. But later his alliance with the Ganga king Sivamara II and the Rashtrakuta Govinda II brought upon him the wrath of Dhruva who had succeeded the latter, and Nandivarman had to conciliate the Rashtrakuta king by rich presents.

During the rule of the next king Dantivarman (c. 796-840 A.D.) the Pallavas suffered severely from the attacks of the Pandyas in the south and the Rashtrakutas from the north. The next king Nandivarman

III, however, defeated the Pandyas and recovered the territories conquered by them. He was a powerful ruler and is said to have built up a powerful fleet. A Tamil inscription at Takuapa, in the Malay Peninsula, refers to a temple of Vishnu and a tank called Avaninaram. This is regarded by some as referring to Nandivarman III who had this title. But towards the close of his reign he was defeated by the Pandyas and died soon after, about A.D. 865. The defeat was avenged by the next king Nripatunga, who inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Pandya king Srimara and once more recovered the power and prestige of the Pallavas. Later in his reign, about 880 A.D., the Pandyas were defeated again in a decisive battle at Sri Purambiyam by the Pallava ruler Aparajita, who was greatly helped by the Cholas and other feudatories. The history of Aparajita is obscure but he was probably a relation of Nripatunga and associated by him with the government of the country. Nripatunga ruled for 41 years though Aparajita seems to have played the chief role in the kingdom during the last part of his reign.

But even the brilliant success of Aparajita could not save the Pallavas. The Chola chief Aditya, hitherto a feudatory, now entertained the ambition of reviving the old glory of the Cholas by overthrowing the Pallavas whose weakness was manifest in the recent fights with the Pandyas. Sometime before 891 A.D. he defeated Aparajita in a pitched battle and conquered Tondai-mandalam. Thus, the Pallava power was destroyed, not by its hereditary enemies, the Pandyas and the Rashtrakutas, but by its own feudatory, the Cholas, who now took its place as the dominant power in the South.

### **The First Pandya Empire**

As noted above, the Pandya power was revived by Kadungon in the last quarter of the 6th century A.D. But very little is known of its history till we come to the reign of the fourth king Arikesari Maravarman (or Parankusa) (c. 670-710 A.D.). He extended his kingdom by conquering Kerala and other principalities, and made a common cause with the Chalukya king Vikramaditya I against the Pallavas. Though he defeated the Pallava king Paramesvaravarman, neither he nor his ally could gain any permanent success. Kochchadayan (710-35 A.D.), who succeeded Arikesari, followed his imperial policy and conquered the greater part, if not the whole of the Kongu country (Coimbatore and Salem Districts). The fight of his

successor Maravarman Rajasimha I (735-65 A.D.) with Nandivarman, the Pallava king, has been mentioned above. But though Rajasimha could not gain any conspicuous success against the Pallavas, he won about 750 A.D. a brilliant victory at Venbai against the confederate forces of the Gangas and their overlord and Chalukyas. His successor Jatila Parantaka alias Varaguna (765-815 A.D.) also won many brilliant victories and extended the boundaries of his kingdom which now included Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Salem and Coimbatore districts. His success against the coalition organised by Nandivarman has been mentioned above.

Srimara Srivallabha (815-862 A.D.), the son of Jatila, began his reign with brilliant victories. He is said to have defeated at Kumbakonam a hostile confederacy consisting, among others, of the Gangas, Pallavas, Cholas, Kalingas and Magadhas. He also led an expedition to Ceylon and sacked its capital. But later in his reign he met with serious disasters. His son Varagunavarman rebelled against him and, at his invitation, the Ceylonese king invaded his dominion. In the meantime, he was attacked by the Pallava king Nripatunga. He was badly defeated by the latter, and during his absence his capital city fell into the hands of the Ceylonese forces. Srimara made an attempt to recover his capital, but was defeated and died soon after. It is probable that the Ceylonese and Pallava rulers acted in concert on this occasion, and found a good tool in Varagunavarman II who now occupied the throne as a feudatory of the Pallava king Nripatunga.

Varaguna made an attempt, later in his reign, to free himself from the yoke of the Pallavas, but was disastrously defeated at Sri Purambiyam about 880 A.D., as mentioned above. He died shortly after and was succeeded by his younger brother Sri Parantaka *alias* Viranarayana Sadayan (880-900 A.D.). During the rule of this king and his successor Maravarman Rajasimha II (c. 900-920 A.D.) the Pandyas came into conflict with the Cholas who were rapidly rising as a great power on the ruins of the Pallavas. Parantaka, son of Aditya Chola, captured the Pandya capital Madura before 910 A.D. The Pandyas formed a coalition with Ceylon, but their combined forces were defeated at Velur, near Madura, about 920 A.D. Rajasimha fled first to Ceylon, and then to Kerala, and was heard of no more. With him ended the Pandya kingdom founded by Kadungon after a glorious existence of more than three hundred years.

### The Gangas, Kadambas and Other Minor Powers

(a) *The Western Gangas* : The Western Gangas, so called to distinguish them from the Eastern Gangas of Kalinga, ruled over a large part of modern Mysore, called after them Gangavadi. The kingdom was founded by Konkanivarman Dharmamahadhiraja, who probably ruled in the second half of the 4th century A.D. and had his capital at Kolar. Harivarman, who ruled from c. 435 to 460 A.D. and was a feudatory of the Pallavas, removed his capital to Talakad (Talakad, near Sivasamudram) on the Kaveri. Durvinita (c. 540-600) threw off the yoke of the Pallavas and conquered Punnad (Southern Mysore) and Kongudesu. He kept friendly relations with the Chalukyas. Like some of his predecessors and successors Durvinita was a great scholar in Sanskrit and is the reputed author of several works. The next important king is Sripurusha (728-788). Kongudesu was lost to the Pandyas, and Sripurusha occupied the unenviable position of ruling over a buffer state between two sets of rivals, the Rashtrakutas and the Pallavas on the one hand, and the Pallavas and Pandyas on the other. He was an ally of the Pandyas and won a great victory over Nandivarman Pallavamalla, though that did not save him from the Rashtrakuta invasions. Sripurusha on the whole acquitted himself creditably and assumed the imperial title Konguni-Rajadhiraja-Paramesvara. He transferred his capital to Manyapure (Manne, near Bangalore) and his kingdom was known as Srirajya, evidently on account of its prosperity. The Nolambas of Nolambavadi (Chitaldrug District) acknowledged his suzerainty.

Sivamara II, the son and successor of Sripurusha, was defeated and twice imprisoned by Rashtrakuta Dhruva and Govinda III, as mentioned above. The Gangas successfully revolted during the troublesome period that followed the accession of Amoghavarsha on the Rashtrakuta throne, and maintained their independence till Krishna III placed on the throne his brother-in-law Butuga II in 937 A.D. During this period, and even later, the Gangas took part in the wars of the Pallavas against the Pandyas, and of the Rashtrakutas against the Cholas, and also fought against the Banas and the Eastern Chalukyas. In 1004 A.D. the Cholas captured Talakad and the Ganga ruler had to accept their suzerainty. But gradually the Ganga ruler had to accept their suzerainty. But gradually the Ganga rule, even as feudatory, came to an end.

(b) *The Kadambas* : The Kadambas claim to have migrated from North India but seem to be an indigenous dynasty of Kuntala (North Kanara District). A very early inscription gives an interesting account of the origin of this royal dynasty. It is said that Mayurasarman, a learned Brahmana, who had gone to Kanchi for study, was insulted by a Pallava official. Burning for revenge he took to military profession, defeated the frontier-guards of the Pallavas, and conquered some territories. Ultimately, he came to terms with the Pallavas and, in return for loyal services, obtained a feudal principality on the western coast. There may be some truth in this, and Mayurasarman probably ruled in the third quarter of the fourth century A.D. It is not unlikely that the political confusion caused by Samudragupta's invasion enabled him to set up an independent kingdom with its capital at Banavasi. His son and successor Kangavarman changed the family title from Sarman to Varman and assumed the title *Dharmamaharajadhiraja*. He was probably the king of Kuntala who was defeated by the Vakataka king Vindhyasena. His grandson Kakusthavarman (c. 430-450 A.D.) seems to have been a powerful king, and he claims to have made many marriage alliances with the Guptas and other kings.

Shortly after the death of Kakusthavarman the southern part of the kingdom was formed into an independent principality under his younger son. Mrigesavarman (c. 475-490 A.D.) of the senior branch claims to have defeated the Western Gangas and the Pallavas. The next important king was Ravivarman who defeated the Western Gangas and made the junior branch of the Kadambas his feudatory. But the glory of the family was short-lived. During the rule of his son Harivarman (c. 537-547 A.D.) the feudatory Chalukya chief Pulakesi established an independent kingdom at Badami, as noted before. Harivarman himself was defeated by Krishnavarman II, ruler of the junior branch.

Krishnavarman's predecessors had to acknowledge the suzerainty, first of the Pallavas and then of the senior branch. Though he reunited the Kadamba kingdom and performed a horse-sacrifice like his namesake, the founder of the junior branch, his son Ajavarman had to submit to the Chalukyas. Ajavarman's son tried to recover his independence, but Pulakesi II captured Banavasi and put an end to the Kadamba kingdom.

(c) *Minor Kingdoms* : But though the Kadambas disappeared as an independent power, individual chiefs and feudatory families

belonging to the clan are met with as late as the tenth century A.D., and even somewhat later. Several other dynasties flourished in South India about the same time as the Kadambas. The Alupas ruled in South Kanara known as Tuluva country which together with two other kingdoms, Kongu (Coimbatore and Salem Districts) and Kerala (Chera), existed from a very early period, long before the Kadambas rose to power. None of them ever attained any political importance and their history may be briefly told.

The Alupas were conquered by the Chalukyas and other great powers, though occasionally we come across some rulers of importance who probably exercised independent powers. The Hoysalas conquered them and annexed their kingdom.

Kongudesa, as noted above, passed successively into the hands of the W. Gangas, Pandyas and Cholas.

In Kerala the old dynasty of the Perumals ended with Cheraman Perumal. It is generally held that he was converted to Islam or Christianity, and the Kollam or Malayalam era, which started in 824-25 A.D., marks the beginning of the new dynasty. Sthanu Ravi of the new dynasty was an ally of Aditya I Chola. The Keralas supplied queens both to the Pandya and Chola courts and gave shelter to the Arabas in the 9th century A.D. whose descendants, born mostly of Indian mothers, are now known as Moplahs. It is also held that the Jews settled in this region in the first century A.D., but the earliest epigraphic evidence is a charter of Bhaskara Ravivarman (978-1036 A.D.) recording grant of lands to Joseph Rabban near Kranganur on the west coast.

The Banas, who traced their descent from *Asura* Bana, ruled in Kolar and North Arcot districts as feudatories of the Pallavas. They gained independence in the ninth century and fought successfully against the Western Gangas and Nolambas. Even though Parantaka I claims to have extirpated them, we find them fighting on the side of the Rashtrakutas against the Cholas in the famous battle of Takkolam in 949 A.D. They were later defeated by the Cholas. But though the kingdom of the Banas disappears we hear of Bana chiefs holding responsible posts even in Pandya country as late as the 16th century A.D.

The Vaidumbas, who occupied the Ranandu country (Cuddapah District) in the 9th century were probably feudatories to the Alupas

and helped them in their wars against the Western Gangas. They were conquered by the Cholas alongwith the Banas.

### **The Cholas**

After playing an important role in the history of South India during the Sangam age, the Cholas ceased to exercise any effective political power for more than five hundred years, due, no doubt, mainly to the invasion, first of the Kalabhras and then of the Pallavas. The name and tradition of the Cholas were, however, continued by the Telugu Chodas who ruled in Renandu (Cuddapah District) as feudatories of the Pallavas, Chalukyas, or Rashtrakutas. About the middle of the 9th century A.D. the obscurity lifts, and we find a powerful Chola chief ruling a feudatory of the Pallavas in the region round Uraiyur, the old capital of the early Cholas like Karikala. As the Pallavas were at constant feuds with the Pandyas, the Cholas, who lived in the borderland between the two, aggrandised themselves at the cost of the Pandyas or their feudatories. Thus, Vijayalaya conquered Tanjore from the Muttarayar, feudatory of the Pandyas, and soon his principality extended from the north to the south Vellar along the lower course of the Kaveri and the Coleroon. Tanjore became the capital of this new kingdom.

As noted above, Aditya I (871-907 A.D.), the son and successor of Vijayalaya, loyally helped his Pallava overlord Aparajita against the Pandyas in the decisive battle of Sri Purambiyam. The grateful suzerain rewarded the services of his feudatory chief by granting him more territories, but the latter had seen the weakness of the Pallavas and was now fired by the ambition of establishing an independent kingdom and reviving the old glory of his family. The final clash between the two was not long in coming, and probably took place sometime before 891 A.D. Aditya defeated and killed the Pallava king and added Tondaimandalam of his dominions. He next conquered Kongu country and defeated the Western Gangas who transferred their allegiance to him. The task so successfully begun by Aditya, was completed by his son and successor Parantaka who ascended the throne in 907 A.D. As noted above, he defeated the Pandyas though the latter were aided by the Simhalese forces, and annexed their kingdom. The last remnants of the Pallava power were extinguished, the Banas were uprooted, and the Vaidumbas were defeated. Thus by 930 A.D. the Cholas ruled over

the whole of South India from the north Penner to Cape Comorin with the exception of the western coast ruled by the Keralas.

But their glory proved to be of short duration. The old enmity between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas had now devolved upon their successors, the Cholas and the Rashtrakutas. The Rashtrakuta king Krishna III, evidently alarmed at the growing power of the Cholas, conquered the Ganga kingdom and invaded South India. He inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Cholas at Takkolam in 949 A.D. and annexed Tondaimandalam. It was a severe blow to the power and prestige of the Cholas and they lost their empire, as the Pandyas and other smaller powers recovered independence.

Parantaka I did not long survive this great disaster which undid his life's work, and probably died in 953 A.D. The history of the Cholas during the next 32 years is somewhat obscure. The Chola king Sundara Chola or Parantaka II (957-973 A.D.) defeated Vira Pandya and his Simhalese allies, but could not gain any decisive or permanent success. But he recovered Tondaimandalam from the Rashtrakutas whose power was crumbling.

The accession of Rajaraja I, the son of Sundara Chola, in 985 A.D. marks the beginning of the most brilliant period in the history of the Cholas. He set on foot a new fashion of adding a detailed list of conquests by the king at the beginning of his official records, and this enables us to trace the rapid growth of the Chola empire. Rajaraja once more began the aggressive imperial policy which received such a rude shock in the hands of the Rashtrakutas. The Western Chalukyas had replaced the Rashtrakutas but inherited the hostility to the Cholas. Rajaraja began by conquering the Western Ganga country and annexing it to his dominions. Then followed the prolonged but indecisive warfare with the Western Chalukyas to which reference has been made above.

But Rajaraja gained brilliant success in the south. He defeated the Kerala ruler, destroyed his ships at Kandalur-Salai (Trivandrum), and attacked Kollam (Quilon); he defeated the Pandya king and seized Madura; and he took possession of the stronghold of Udagai in Kudamalai (Coorg) which gave him a position of vantage against both the Pandyas and Keralas. He also conquered the Maldiv islands by means of his powerful navy. To crown all, he invaded Ceylon and annexed the northern part of the island.



Rajaraja also interfered in the affairs of the Eastern Chalukya kingdom to prevent the growth of an alliance between the Eastern and Western Chalukyas. He conquered Vengi, put on its throne his own nominee Saktivarman, and cemented the alliance by marrying his daughter Kundavvai to Vimaladitya the younger brother of Saktivarman, a marriage which was big with future consequences. Rajaraja also came into conflict with the Gangas of Kalinga, who had an eye on Vengi, and defeated them.

Rajaraja was one of the greatest rulers of South India, and fully deserved the title, "The Great", that is usually applied to him. He was a great conqueror and laid the foundation of the mighty Chola empire. He also made excellent arrangement for the administration of his vast dominions, to which reference will be made later. The great land-survey, which he commenced in 1000 A.D., and the growth of local self-government constitute great landmarks in the Administrative History of India. Another practice followed, though perhaps not inaugurated, by him, was also calculated to improve the administrative system. In 1012 A.D. he associated his son Rajendra with him in the administration. It gave valuable practical experience to the future king and prevented struggle for succession.

Rajaraja was a great builder, and the famous temple at Tanjore, named after him as Rajarajesvara, still testifies to the glory of Chola art. Rajaraja was himself a Saiva but he also erected temples for Vishnu and helped the Sailendra king of Java, Maravijayottungavarman, to construct and endow a Buddhist *vihara*.

Rajendra ascended the throne on his father's death in 1018 A.D., but his reign-period was held to commence from 1012 A.D. when he was crowned a *yuvaraja* and associated with the government of his father. Rajendra himself followed the practice adopted by his father and crowned his son Rajadhiraja as *yuvaraja* in 1018 A.D.

Rajendra, usually known as Rajendra Chola, was the worthy son of a worthy father and raised the Chola power to the high watermark of greatness. His extensive conquests are referred to in his records, and may be briefly enumerated. In the south he not only conquered the Pandya and Chera countries, as well as Ceylon, but ruled all these as provinces of his empire. He severely defeated the Chalukyas in several engagements, and even sacked the capital city, but could not gain any permanent success.

Two military expeditions of this reign deserve special notice, one, sent along the eastern coast, passed through Kalinga, Odra (Orissa) and south Kosala to Bengal, and defeated not only three petty rulers of West and South Bengal, but even the great Pala king Mahipala. The avowed object of the expedition, which proceeded up to the bank of the Ganga, was to bring the sacred water of that river, and it is said that the defeated kings were made to carry it on their shoulders. But in any case, it was of the nature of a raid, and did not lead to any addition to the empire. The other expedition may be regarded as unique in the history of India. It was a big naval expedition, equipped on a scale unknown before or since in ancient India, with the object of conquering the Sailendra empire which comprised the Malay Peninsula, Java, Sumatra, and many other neighbouring islands. The Sailendras were on friendly terms with Rajaraja, and the reasons for the hostility of Rajendra are unknown. But he achieved brilliant success. His fleet crossed the Bay of Bengal and landed an army which conquered successively a number of feudal principalities in Sumatra, and possibly also in Java, and then crossing over to Malay Peninsula conquered Kataha or Kadaram (Keddah), the chief stronghold of the Sailendras. The mighty Sailendra empire, the biggest naval power in the east, lay prostrate before the victorious Chola army, and Rajendra Chola had the proud satisfaction of seeing his banner floating from the bank of the Ganga to the island of Ceylon, and across the Bay of Bengal over Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula.

Rajendra Chola was without doubt one of the greatest conquerors in Indian history and was fully justified in assuming the proud titles of Kadarangonda and Gangaikonda in memory of his great victories. He also built a new capital called Gangaikondasolapuram and lavishly decorated it with temples and palaces. One of his greatest achievements was a magnificent irrigation tank sixteen miles in length. He also established a big college for teaching the various branches of Vedic study. Rajendra Chola was thus not only a great conqueror, but also excelled in arts of peace. Like his illustrious predecessors he improved the efficiency of administration to an extent unknown before.

Rajadhiraja, the son of Rajendra Chola, who had been associated with his father in the government as early as 1018, succeeded him in 1044 A.D. He spent his time mostly in quelling the rebellions that frequently occurred in the vast empire left by his predecessors. He was

eminently successful in maintaining order in his kingdom by inflicting crushing defeats upon the revolted kings of Chola, Pandya, Ceylon and other minor states. He then invaded the Chalukya dominions and carried fire and sword wherever he went. The Chalukya king Somesvara met him at Koppam, and in the sanguinary battle which ensued the Chola king lost his life (1052 or 1053 A.D.). The victory was, however, gained by Rajendra, the brother of the deceased Chola king, who got himself crowned in the battlefield.

The struggle between the Cholas and the Chalukyas continued and many a sanguinary battle took place, the most notable of them being fought at Kudal-Sangamam, a place not yet definitely identified. Virarajendra, the Chola king, who ascended the throne in 1063 A.D., gained victory in many battles and successfully ruled over the vast empire. He was succeeded by his son in 1070 A.D., but the latter was driven away within a year and the Chola empire passed on to Kulottunga I.

Kulottunga I, the son of the Eastern Chalukya king, Rajaraja, had a great deal of Chola blood in him. His father's mother was the daughter of Rajaraja the Great, his own mother was the daughter of the great Rajendra Chola Gangaikonda, and he had married the daughter of Rajendra, the victor at Koppam. He set aside Adhirajendra, the son of Virarajendra, put down the rebellion raised on his behalf, and firmly established himself on the Chola throne (1070 A.D.). He was a brave and vigorous king and many a martial exploit is set to his credit. During his long rule (1070-1118 A.D.) he repelled repeated invasions of the powerful Chalukya king Vikramaditya VI (who espoused the cause of Adhirajendra whose sister he had married), and subdued the rebellions in his kingdom. But Ceylon became independent.

Kulottunga appointed his sons as viceroys of Vengi and defeated Anantavarman Chodaganga of Kalinga. But about 1118 A.D. Vikramaditya VI took possession of Vengi, as mentioned above. The rise of the Hoysalas about this time was another ominous factor, and already they had driven the Cholas beyond the Kaveri, thus freeing the Mysore Plateau from their domination. Kulottunga made two land-surveys, one in 1081 and another in 1110 A.D.

The reigns of the successors of Kulottunga during the next hundred years (1118-1216) were uneventful from a political point of

view, except for a prolonged war with the Ceylonese king on behalf of one of the rival claimants to the Pandya kingdom, and the rise in power of a number of feudatory states such as the Telugu-Chodas (of Renandu), Banas and Kadavas. Other noticeable features were the rapid growth of the Hoysalas, Pandyas, the Eastern Gangas of Kalinga and the Kakatiyas.

The effect of all these factors was clearly seen in the reign of Rajaraja III (1216-1246). He was severely defeated by the Pandyas who even seized his capital. The Hoysalas had established a powerful kingdom, and more than once the Chola king had to invoke their aid in order to put down the rebellious chiefs. During most of the period the Chola rulers were, for all practical purposes, proteges of the Hoysalas.

On one occasion, the Chola king became a prisoner in the hands of Ko-Perunjinga, one of his feudal barons, and this was a signal for the disruption of the mighty empire. Rajendra III (1246-1279 A.D.) obtained some success against the Pandyas but suffered a severe blow when Ganapati Kakatiya occupied Kanchi (1250 A.D.). Taking advantage of the state of confusion that followed, Jatavarman Sundara Pandya marched north, defeated the Cholas, Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas, advanced as far as Nellore, and occupied it. The Chola king Rajendra III henceforth ruled as the feudatory of the Pandya, and the last vestige of the Chola kingdom was swept away by the invasion of Malik Naib Kafur in 1310 A.D.

### **The Hoysalas**

Reference has just been made above to the rising power of the Hoysalas. They first came into prominence as chiefs of the borderland during the prolonged struggle between the Later Chalukyas and the Cholas. When the Chalukyas finally conquered the region which was formerly ruled by the Western Gangas, the Hoysala chiefs were appointed governors of the frontier outposts, and thus gradually became powerful. Early in the 12th century, or somewhat earlier, the Hoysala chief Ballala I ruled over a small principality as feudatory of the Chalukyas, with his capital at Belur; but it seems that Dvarasamudra (modern Halebid) was also an alternative capital.

Shortly after 1106 A.D. Ballala was succeeded by his younger brother Bittideva, or Vishnuvardhana, who laid the foundation of the

greatness of the family. He conquered and annexed Gangavadi and Nolambavadi (Bellary District), and by 1131 A.D. extended the boundary of his kingdom to the Krishna. It thus not only comprised the whole of Mysore but even some borderlands to the north. This brought him into conflict with the Western Chalukya emperors Vikramaditya and Somesvara III and other chieftains of petty principalities in the neighbourhood, but Vishnuvardhana claims to have defeated them all. Though in 1137 A.D. he performed the Tulapurusha ceremony, which is a symbol of assuming sovereign power, he nominally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Western Chalukyas till his death in 1141 A.D. or shortly after.

It was Vira Ballala II (1173-1220), the grandson of Vishnuvardhan, who finally declared independence in 1193 A.D., evidently taking advantage of the decline of the Chalukya power. This brought the Hoysalas into conflict with the Yadavas. Ballala's son and successor Narasimha II (1120-1234 A.D.) was also a powerful ruler and supported the declining Chola power against the Pandyas and other refractory vassals. His son Somesvara (1234-1262 A.D.) took the Chola kingdom under his protecting wings, and settled himself with his younger son Ramanatha in a new capital city which he built at Kannanur near Srirangam, leaving the Hoysala kingdom proper in charge of his elder son Narasimha III. Somesvara fought vigorously and frequently against the Pandyas, but was ultimately defeated and killed, while the latter drove the Hoysalas from the Kaveri region in the south and overran the Chola kingdom. On the death of Somesvara his kingdom was divided between his two sons. Narasimha III (1262-1291 A.D.) fought successfully against the Yadavas, but his younger brother, being finally driven by the Pandyas from the south, rebelled against him and occupied part of his territory. The unity of the kingdom was restored by Vira Ballala III, the son and successor of Narasimha. Ballala ably defended his kingdom against the Pandyas, and had to fight hard against the Yadavas and a number of refractory feudal chiefs who had risen to power in the south on the fall of the Chola empire. While he was thus engaged, the Muslim invasion broke in upon South India. He was defeated in 1310 A.D. by Kafur, but for more than 30 years maintained the struggle, first against Khiljis and then against Muhammad Tughluq. Although Tughluq menace diminished on account of the rebellions by which that emperor was faced, Ballala III had to fight against the Muslim dynasty established at Madura which posted a strong garrison at Kannanur, the old southern capital of the

Hoysalas. He fought bravely against them and died in a battle near Trichinopoly in 1342. He was succeeded by his son who ruled for a short while and then the Hoysalas disappear from history.

### **The Second Pandya Empire**

After the overthrow of the Pandya kingdom by Chola Parantaka I, early in the 10th century A.D., the Pandyas made several attempts to reassert their independence, but without success, being severely defeated by Rajendra Chola, Kulottunga I, and Kulottunga III. The last named, who ruled from 1178 to 1216 A.D., led three campaigns against the Pandyas in 1182, 1189 and 1205 A.D., and defeated Jatavarman Kulasekhara who had assumed royal power (1190-1216) and conquered Travancore.

Kulasekhara's successor Maravarman Sundara Pandya (1216-38), however, turned the table completely against the Cholas. He defeated Kulottunga III and burnt Uraiyur and Tanjore. But Kulottunga got back his kingdom with the help of the Hoysalas, though he had probably to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Pandyas. The Chola-Rajaraja III renewed the struggle and was again defeated, but was saved again by the intervention of the Hoysalas. Though twice foiled by the Hoysalas in his struggle against the Cholas, Maravarman ruled over an extensive territory including Trichinopoly and Pudukkottai. His successor Maravarman Sundara Pandya II (1238-1251 A.D.) was defeated by Rajendra III, and probably acknowledged the overlordship of the Cholas. But this was fully avenged by the next king Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I (1251-68 A.D.) who was the most powerful king of this period and established the Second Pandya empire. He defeated the Chera king, overthrew the Hoysala power in the south, and completely destroyed the Chola power as mentioned above. He also conquered Northern Ceylon, and put down the turbulent chiefs that rose to power on the decline of the Cholas. He captured Kanchi, defeated Ganapati Kakatiya, and advanced triumphantly as far as Nellore. He annexed both the Chola kingdom and Kongudesa, and ruled over a vast empire that included the whole of South India (excluding Mysore) as far as Nellore in the north, and also northern Ceylon. He lavished the enormous wealth he had plundered from the conquered countries in decorating and endowing the temples, particularly those of Srirangam and Chidambaram which were provided with golden roofs.

The Pandya kings followed the Chola practice of associating the

princes in the government, and these often issued inscriptions in their own names even before they had actually ascended the throne, taking credit for victories which they perhaps, won during the preceding reign. Thus, Jatavarman Vira Pandya (1253-75) was associated with both Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I and his successor Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya (1268-1310 A.D.) who in his turn associated no less than four other princes, viz., Jatavarman Sundara Pandya II (1276 A.D.), Maravarman Vikram Pandya (1283 A.D.), Jatavarman Vira Pandya II (1296 A.D.) and Jatavarman Sundara Pandya III (1303 A.D.). This explains the wrong notion held by even contemporary foreign writers, that the Pandya kingdom was divided among a number of independent rulers.

Kulasekhara maintained intact the vast empire he had inherited. He captured Kollam (Quilon) and sent a victorious expedition to Ceylon which returned with the famous Tooth relic of Buddha. Parakramabahu, the king of Ceylon, however, offered submission and regained the relic.

The Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who visited the Pandya country in 1293 A.D., has left a detailed account of the power, wealth and grandeur of the empire which he calls "India, the Greatest, best of all the Indians," and "the finest and noblest in the world." It contained a number of ports which were the great centres of world-trade, a detailed account of which we get also from Muslim historians specially Wassaf.

Maravarman had two sons, a legitimate one named Jatavarman Sundara Pandya and an illegitimate one named Jatavarman Vira Pandya. As the latter was chosen the heir-apparent, the former killed his father and ascended the throne in 1310 A.D. But Vira Pandya soon expelled the parricide who thereupon appealed for help of Malik Naib Kafur who had invaded the Hoysala kingdom. Kafur was only too glad at this invitation, for Vira Pandya had helped the Hoysala ruler against him, and the quarrel between the two brothers gave him an excellent opportunity to extinguish the last Hindu kingdom in the extreme south of India.

The invasion of Kafur in 1310 A.D. destroyed all the Hindu kingdoms in this region which once formed part of the Chola and the Pandya empires, but half a century later a new empire arose which fairly rivalled them. This was the empire of Vijayanagara, the story of which

occupies a prominent place in the Muhammedan period of Indian History.

## INDIAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

### I

Two great works on Politics—Kautilya's Arthasastra and the Raja-Sabdanuwana Parva of the *Mahabharata*—have time down to us from ancient India. The...was discovered three decades ago by a Mysore scholar, and the other has long...current and known to the Indian popular. These two are both finished works dealing with government, as ancient conceived it in a scholastic and philosophic manner.

These two works were produced in the two day of the Indian intellect and under the stress and inspiration of great political epoch. Kautilya lived according to tradition, in the times of Chandra Gupta Maurya and helped him in building his empire—a fact which is referred to in the concluding verse of Kautilya's works which we possess. If this tradition is true and Kautilya's age be taken as that of Chandragupta Maurya, which some scholars especially Doctor Jolly deny, who puts his age much later, it would shed a great light on the scope of Kautilya's work and the ideas which inspired its composition. An India divided into small autonomous states, some monarchical and some republican, scattered all over the country from the Indus to the mouth of the Ganges, torn by internecine wars and suddenly and for the first time in its history attacked and ravaged by a foreign invader from the distant West, who laid low her kings and battered her cities, revealed the weakness of her political system and the danger therefrom to the sacred Aryavarta. The empire raised by the intrepid Chandragupta seemed to possess the requisite elements of power and strength and the capacity to protect the land. The methods, therefore, of acquiring such a dominion, of preserving and strengthening it all round, became the chief preoccupation of Kautilya's mind.

The *Mbh* provides some astronomical data, from which several modern scholars have tried to deduce the date of the Bharata War. P.C. Sengupta calculated that the Bharata war took place in 2449 B.C. while according to Raja Rao, the event took place in 2442 B.C.<sup>1</sup> These views have been challenged, and the dates proposed for the Bharata War on the basis of astronomical calculation range from 3137 B.C. to 1400



B.C.; but it seems that astronomical calculations would favour some date in the twenty-fifth century B.C.

Another method of calculating the date of the Bharata War is based on archaeological findings, which it may be noted, was unknown to the Western scholars who worked on the *Mbh*. Excavations carried out during 1950 to 1952 at Hastinapura (on the right bank of the Ganges, near Meerut) revealed five periods of occupation, with a clear cut break in between them all. When about two metres of occupational deposits of the second level of occupation from bottom (Period II) had been formed, a heavy flood of the Ganges washed away a considerable part of the settlement. Now, the *Puranas* record a devastating flood of the Ganges which destroyed Hastinapura in the reign of Nicaksu, sixth in descent from Pariksit. Therefore, the date of Yudhisthira would be about 200 years before the flood.

It is not possible to go into details here, but a peculiar type of pottery, called the Painted Grey Ware (PGW) has been discovered at the flood level at Hastinapura. The period of occupation by the PGW people has been taken as c 1100-600 B.C., from which it may be held that the Bharata War was fought sometime between 1400 B.C. to 1100 B.C.

There is thus a discrepancy of about 1000 years between the date of Bharata War as obtained by astronomical calculation, and by the interpretation of date furnished by archaeological exploration. At the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to bridge the mutually incomprehensible gulf between astronomy and archaeology.

Historians usually prefer the 'archaeological date', because the 'astronomical date' would place the Bharata War during or even before the Harappan Age, which is supposed to be pre-Vedic. Indeed the Vedic people are supposed to have destroyed it. Recently, however, excavations in Greece and Asia Minor have shown that the earliest movement for the Indo-European people may be assigned to the third millennium B.C. On a similar basis, the Harappan culture may be ascribed to the Vedic people. At least the possibility cannot be totally ignored. The archaeologists have assumed that the earliest date for the *Vedas* would be about 1500 B.C. This, it may be pointed out, is an assumption without any evidence.

It is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory solution regarding the date of the Bharata War. It may be noted, however, that many difficulties of ancient Indian chronology would be solved if the Harappan civilization is admitted to be Vedic, and the end of the Harappan civilization is permitted to be synchronized with the Bharata War.

### Date of the Mahabharata

Regarding the date of the composition of *Mbh* many theories have been formulated. It is neither necessary nor possible to examine the various theories. We shall only examine the theory evolved by E.W. Hopkins and subject it to 'critical analysis' that being the method he applied to his *Mbh study*.<sup>2</sup>

Hopkins suggested the development of the *Mbh* in different stages to which he assigned tentative dates. These are as follows :

1. *Bharata (Kuru)* lays, perhaps combined into one, but with no evidence of an epic before 400 B.C.
2. *A Mahabharata tale* with Pandu heroes lays and legends combined by the Puranic diaskeuasts, Krishna as a demigod (no evidence of didactic form or of Krishna's divine supremacy). 400-200 B.C.
3. *Remaking of the epic* with Krishna as all-god, intrusion of masses of didactic matter, addition of Puranic material old and new; multiplication of exploits 200 B.C. to 100 A.D.
4. *The last books added* with the introduction to the first book—the swollen Anusasana separated from santi and recognized as a separate book, 200 to 400 A.D.; and finally 400 A.D. + occasional amplifications .....

Hopkins then concluded: "1. That the Pandu epic as we have it, or even without the masses of didactic material, was composed or compiled after the Greek invasion; 2. That this epic only secondarily developed its present masses of didactic material; 3. That it did not become a specially religious propaganda of Krishnaism (in the accepted sense of that sect of Vaishnavas) till the first century B.C.; 4. That the epic was practically completed by 200 A.D.; 5. That there is no "date of the epic" which will cover all its parts (though handbook makers may safely assign it in general to the second century B.C.)."<sup>3</sup>

For his conclusions, Hopkins relied mainly on three major premisses, namely :

1. Reference in the *Mbh* to Yavanas and Rome, from which Hopkins concluded that the passages or parts containing those references could be composed only after Alexander's invasion (327-325 B.C.).<sup>4</sup>
2. Hopkins assumed that the Pandavas ruled over the entire sub-continent.<sup>5</sup>

To these one has to add Hopkins's predilection for Buddhism which prevented him from considering whether those passages in the *Mbh* which reflect anti-Vedic sentiments could be anterior to Buddha, as suggested by Dahlmann.<sup>6</sup>

The points raised by Hopkins are still considered valid by many scholars—both Western and Indian—and we shall now consider them.

First is the mention of Yavanas in several verses of the *Mbh*. It is usually assumed that *Yavana* means Ionians, therefore Greeks, and since Alexander brought the Greeks to India, Indians could not have known of the Greeks, *i.e.* Ionians, or Yavanas before Alexander's invasion. This syllogism stands on assumed premises which are not based on any evidence.

In this connection we refer to M.M. Kane who has observed : The word *yavana* is an exact reproduction of *Ionian* which was originally a mountainous coast in Asia Minor about 20 to 30 miles broad. There is nothing to show, as Western writers are fond of saying, that Panini refers to Alexander and the Greeks that came with and after him. Miletus was in the 6th century B.C. the richest city in the Greek world. In Panini's days *yavanani* meant only the *yavana* alphabet. Later on all Greeks came to be called Ionians.<sup>7</sup>

According to the *Smaller Classical Dictionary*, *Ionian* was 'colonized by the Indian Greeks at a time earlier than any distinct historical records. The mythical account of "the great Ionic migration" relates that in consequence of the disputes between the sons of Codrus...his younger sons...crossed the Aegæan Sea in search of a new home, 140 years after the Trojan war, or 1044 B.C.

Therefore the verses mentioning *yavana* could have been composed any time after c. 1044 B.C. if one takes the date of the

mythical Trojan war seriously. Anyway, Ionian confederation is of historical times and anterior to 700 B.C.

There is, however, one verse in the *Mbh* which favours Hopkins's thesis. As this verse appeared only in the Critical Edition, Hopkins, who relied on the Vulgate, was unable to quote it. The verse is :

*Antakhim cai = va Roman Ca*  
*Yavananam puram tatha*  
*dutair eva vase cakre*  
*karam cai = nan = adapayat* (2.28.49)

(Antakhi, Roma and the city of the *Yavanas* submitted to [Sahadeva's] ambassador and sent tributes.)

On 'Roma', Dr. Edgerton writes : 'This must now be recognized as the oldest occurrence in India of the name of Rome and the only known occurrence in Sanskrit of the name with its proper feminine gender *Roma*. It justifies the inference that our text cannot have been composed at any time before this city's name came to the ears of the Indians. This means surely not before the 1st century B.C. and very likely not until a century or two later.'<sup>8</sup>

Antakhi is certainly Antioch, while Yavanapura may be Alexandria as was suggested by Kern long ago. The sending of ambassadors to these cities reminds us of Asoka sending his emissaries to the Hellenic world. It may be mentioned that Romaka or Rome is once again mentioned in the *Mbh* (2.47.15).

However, if the *Mbh* text is to be dated by the known dates of intrusion of foreign tribes or foreign invaders in India, its date must be considerably later. For, Hunas and Sakas are mentioned many times and it is wellknown that the Hunas invaded India in the middle of the 5th century A.D. But no scholar suggests such a late date for the text and Hopkins, as we have seen merely states,...' finally 400 A.D. + occasional amplifications, the existence of which no one acquainted with Hindu literature would be disposed antecedently to doubt...<sup>9</sup> Presumably, these 'amplifications,' cover the Hunas, but why cannot the same assumption cover the case of the *Yavanas* and of Roma?

It is peculiar that while 2.28.48-49 describes the submission to Sahadeva's envoys of Antakhi, Roma, as well as of Pandya, Dravida,

Urdra, Kerala, Andhra, Talavana and Ustrakarnika, 2.28.45-47 describes the submission to Sahadeva's envoys of Kalamukha, who were half-men and half-*raksasas*, Kolagiri, Muracipattana, Tamradvipa (copper island), Ramka mountain, Timingila, Kevalas, Forest dwellers, city of Samjayanti, Pakhandas and Karnahatakas. None of the countries or the people mentioned in 2.28.45-47 can be identified and some are apparently methical, while all the countries mentioned alongwith Antakhi and Roma—except two—are wellknown. Can it be that 2.28.45-47 not being intelligible to any one, verses 2.28.48-49 were inserted later? We would suggest very much later, in view of 2.28.50 which states that Sahadeva sent Ghatotkacha from Broach as an ambassador to Bibhisana at Lanka. Broach became the starting Port of Western India for Ceylon by the beginning of the Christian era or a couple of centuries before. It is also far from clear as to how Sahadeva could have obtained the services of Ghatotkacha—who is not mentioned before—at Broach. These passages seem to be a very late inflation.

We now have to discuss a few verses which point to the great antiquity of the text :

*tatas = tyakrah sriya raja*  
*daityanam Balir = abravat*  
*yavat purasat pratapet*  
*tavad vai daksinam disam*  
*pascimam tavad era = pi*  
*tath-odicim divakarah*  
*tatha madhyam-dine suryo*  
*astam eti yada tada*  
*punar=deva=suram yuddham*  
*bhavi jetaasmi vas=tada* (12.218.30-31)

(Then being forsaken by Lakshmi, Bali, the king of demons said : 'So long the sun shines in the east, it will also illumine west, south and north. When the sun will set at mid-day, there will again be war between the gods and the demons, and I shall defeat you all [gods]')

On these passages, Dr. Belvalkar observes :

'...The equal shining of the sun in the Eastern, Southern, Western and Northern sky necessarily implies (a) the sun's going round and round the horizon with an increasing altitude, (b) having reached the maximum altitude, the sun's rotation with a decreasing altitude, and

(c) his setting for the rest of the year. This is a phenomenon possible in the Polar and Circumpolar regions as described by B.G. Tilak, *Arctic Home in the Veda*, Bali's mistake is his ignoring the stage (b) A vague reminiscence of the ancestors of the Devas and Daityas in the Circumpolar region seems to underlie the present passage. The sun's midday setting seemed so unnatural that the original hiatus *suryo astam* has been sought to be removed and "corrected" by the MSS and explained away by the commentators...<sup>10</sup>

Again commenting on the *Mahaprasthanika-parvan*, Dr. Belvalkar remarks :

'Before reaching the Himalaya, the starting point of their East-South-West-North *pradaksina*, the party passes through many a country, river, mountain and ocean, and eventually reaches the Lauhitya Ocean.<sup>11</sup> From thence starting on the *Pradaksina* proper, they follow an eastward (more accurately perhaps a south-eastward) course along the upper shore of Lavana Ocean until they reach the region where the river Brahmaputra takes a sharp west-wending turn around the eastern terminus of the Himalayas and follows in a southern direction.<sup>12</sup> From the mouth of the river Brahmaputra, the party proceeding straight westwards<sup>13</sup> along the Vindhya mountain obtains a distant view of Dvarka (then submerged). Thence they turned in a northerly direction and saw the Himalayas once more. That completed the *pradaksina*.

'Thereafter, the party proceeds (northwards) towards the mountains of Meru, the reputed home of the gods and there through fatigue they drop down one by one...

The main interest of this tour around the world consists in the fact that, properly interpreted, it, in some respects, confirms B.G. Tilak's theory of the "*Arctic Home*" in the *Veda* as the original Aryan home the next home of the Aryans being the "Land of the Seven rivers," in Central Asia: See note to the *Mahaprasthanika parvan*, That in fact seems to have once been the traditional belief.<sup>14</sup>

In the note, Dr. Belvalkar adds:

'Having crossed the Himalaya, and before reaching the mountain Meru, the party had to cross an extensive sandy-desert (*valukarnaya*). According to B.G. Tilak's *Arctic Home in the Veda*, the old Meru was a circumpolar mountain, the location of which continued to be shifted

southwards with the migration of the Aryans from the polar region. According to a paper contributed by N.G. Sardesai to the R.G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume, (pp.93-6), there is, in Central Asia, what is known as The Land of the Seven Rivers (Semiretchenski-Krai) which has features that might entitle the region to be called an intermediate or transitional "Home of the Aryans" before they came down to the "Land of the Five Rivers (the Punjab)." At present the Merv (or Meru) is an extensive Oasis (*valakarnava*) north of the Hindukush mountain'<sup>15</sup>

Lokamanya Tilak's theory of the *Arctic Home of the Aryans* was not accepted by any scholar as worthy of serious considerations, and Dr. Belvalkar is the first to revive it. This is not the place to go into that theory, but it has to be admitted that Dr. Belvalkar's observation on the verses quoted above can neither be ignored nor explained away as wishful thinking. It is particularly significant that the passage on midday-setting of the sun occurs in a chapter of the *Santi-parvan* which is usually regarded as very late accretions. But now this chapter (12.218) and possibly many others in the *Santi-parvan* will have to be included in the earliest recension of the *Mbh*. Thus it seems that if the lowest strata of the *Mbh* text is to be A.D. 400 + as suggested by Hopkins, the earliest strata would be at least 1500 B.C.—

As noted above another point emphasized by Hopkins is that the Pandavas were rulers of the entire subcontinent. This is a gratuitous assumption, contradicted by the *Mbh*. After the war, when the Pandavas had ruled for fifteen years, Dhrtarastra and Gandhari left for *vanaprashtha*, and Kunti also accompanied them. Sometime later the Pandava brothers went to see the recluses, and at the time of bidding them farewell Yudhishthira told his mother: 'There is a disturbing void in the (political) world, few friends are left, and my army is not as strong as it was formerly (*bandhava nah pariksina balam no na yatha pura*). The Pancalas are practically finished and exist as a name; there is none that can lead them. The Cedis and the Matsyas are no longer what they were? Only the Vrsni-confederation (Vrsni-cakra) remains protected by Vasudeva' (15.44.31-34). These are not the words of an emperor whose rule extended over the whole of India.

The performance of the *Asvamedha* sacrifice does not indicate the conquest of the countries through which the horse travelled. The wellknown obligation of a sovereign monarch was to impede passage

of the horse, and when defeated, he had to attend the *Asvamedha* ceremony. This is made quite clear in the *Mbh*. Similarly, when Yudhisthira performed the *Rajasuya* sacrifice, the Pandavas defeated many kings. They attended Yudhisthira's *Rajasuya* sacrifice, but retained their kingdoms, and later fought at Kurukshetra.

When the Pandavas gave up their kingdom they installed Pariksit at Hastinapura, and Krsna's grandson, Vajra, at Indraprastha. (17.1.7-9; 16.8.70). As Yudhisthira could not find any other territory for Vajra, it seems quite evident that Yudhisthira's rule was confined within the former Kaurava kingdom of Duryodhana. The *Mbh* does not refer to any warfare after the Kurukshetra war, except Arjuna's expedition with the *Asvamedha* horse. Even that was a much smaller affair than what the four brothers accomplished at the time of the *Rajasuya*. The result of the fratricidal war was not the creation of a large empire. Yudhisthira gained his ancestral throne, and then he and his brothers were too weary to carve out an empire. Arjuna's *Rajasuya* expedition was not an unqualified success.

### Religion and Philosophy in the Mahabharata

Another point stressed not only by Hopkins, but by many other scholars, is that the *Mbh* shows influence of Buddhism. Hopkins is more careful than others, and admits that 'in the latter section, and in many others' "enlightened," *Budha* and *Buddha*, refers to Brahmanas: and *Nirvana* in epic teleology usually means bliss, for example, and bliss of drinking when one is thirsty, or the bliss of heaven.<sup>16</sup> Hopkins also admits that the wearer of a yellow robe was not necessarily a Buddhist. However, he writes: 'But xii. 18.32, "those who cast off the *Vedas* and wander about as beggars shaved and wearing the yellow robe" refers distinctly to Buddhist, as I opine. Similarly, the remark, "they that are Buddhas, enlightened, are devoted to *Nirvana* (xii. 167.46 [Bombay ed.]) may be put beside the *Buddhas* of xii. 160.33 who "have no fear of return to this world and no dread of another..."<sup>17</sup> These examples, however, do not sustain Hopkins's conclusion.

The first example (Cr. Ed. 12.18.31) has to be read in its proper context (12.18.29-34) where Arjuna condemns the false monks and says that 'one does not become a *bhiksu* merely by renunciation, by stupidity, or by begging. He is a *bhiksu* who has given up wealth and (worldly) happiness in a straightforward manner. He alone is free (*mukta*) who



having no attachment (yet) behaves like one who has attachment, who is without any desire (*sanga*) has cut himself off from all bondages and (impartially) perceives friends and foes as equal. Many men with shaven heads and in ochre coloured robes move about for collecting alms. As they are subjected to various ties, they seek unsuccessfully objects of pleasure. Many foolish men give up the [study of the] three *Vedas*, [and other pursuits, such as] agriculture, animal husbandry, and trade [and even] forsake their sons, take up the three staves of a *parivrajaka* and put on the dress [of a *sannyasin*]. If the *kasaya* (attachment, revulsion etc.) of the heart is not cleansed, the adoption of *kasaya* (ochre robes) by the *dharmadhvaj*as (those who loudly pretend to be religion) with shaven heads would be just a trick for earning their livelihood. On King, you will gain heaven, if, with your sense under your control, you distribute ochre robes, deer skins and treebarks to the nude, shaven headed or braided-haired (monks.)' Evidently, Arjuna was throughout condemning false monks in general without any sectarian bias. He confessed later, that he had forgotten the *Bhagavad-Gita*, but apparently retained a little of its main doctrine. Secondly, as a prince, he had a natural repugnance for lazy drones.

Regarding the other example cited by Hopkins (12.161.44) we shall merely quote Dr. Belvalkar's remark: 'A possible reference to the Buddhists is here suspected (cf. Hopkins, *The Great Epic*, p.88 but the whole context is against it.'<sup>18</sup>

It may therefore be concluded that there is no reference to Buddhism in the *Mbh*.

The systems of philosophy discussed in the *Mbh* are the *Samkhya* and the *Yoga*. But the *Samkhya* of the *Mbh* is not the classical *Samkhya* of the *Samkhya-sutra* nor of the *Samkhya-karika* of Isvara-krsna though there are similarities. The *Yoga* is not treated in detail, but it does not appear that the *Mbh* was summarizing the *Yoga-sutra* of Pantanjali.

The *Mbh* does not present a unified system of metaphysics. Philosophical observations are disseminated practically throughout the work, but certain chapters present a deliberate discourse on the nature of the ultimate reality. Of these the most wellknown are the *Sanat-Sujatiya* (5.42 to 45), the *Bhagavad-Gita* (6.25 to 42), the *Moksa-dharma-parvan* (12.168 to 353) and the *Anugita* (14.16 to 50).<sup>19</sup> Samkaracarya wrote commentaries on the *Sanat-Sujatiya* and the *Gita*,

and since then these two have been treated as almost separate texts. Modern scholars have fixed their attention on the *Gita*, and since then these two have been treated as almost separate texts. Modern scholars have fixed their attention on the *Gita*, and many of them are not disposed to accept it as a part of the *Mbh* at all. The date of the chapters of the *Mokshadharma-parvan* is also disputed, and actually up to now scholarly attempts have been mainly confined to the discovery of dates; the discussion of philosophical matter in the *Mbh* has been incidental to that overriding quest.

No attempt has yet been made to study the philosophical systems presented in the *Mbh*, to find out whether the aggregate is merely, the sum of the parts, or more than the sum. The present work is intended for a different kind of study in which discussion of philosophy would be inexpedient. Still a few general observations may be made here.

The long chapters on religion and philosophy in the *Mbh* are extremely important particularly as an indicator. The *Kaliyuga*, or the present materialist era, had either started or was about to start, and men were questioning the authority of the *Vedas*, efficacy of the Vedic sacrifices, and the social superiority of the *Brahmanas*. The answers given in the *Mbh* are rarely satisfactory. Indeed the great sages sometimes avoid a direct answer : and their habit of answering a pertinent question by citing an ancient historical lore is unsatisfactory.<sup>20</sup> The propriety of animal sacrifice is raised several times, and *ahimsa paramo dharmah* is declared more than once.<sup>21</sup> Yet at the end, Yudhisthira performs the *Asvamedha sacrifice*. But as if to show the superiority of piety over Vedic sacrifices, an incident is related after Yudhisthira's *Asvamedha* sacrifice, which shows that it is less meritorious that the act of charity performed by a *Brahmana* family under dire condition.<sup>22</sup>

The Samkhya and Yoga doctrines are traced to the *Upanishads*, and are declared to be Vedic. But these doctrines as developed in the chapters or in the classical *Samkhya* texts are foreign to the spirit of the *Upanishads*. The *Moksadharma* chapters describe the main features of the *Samkhya*, but from several standpoints, with subtle or even fundamental variations.<sup>23</sup> Certain doctrines are only to be found in the *Moksadharma* and nowhere else, and the *Moksadharma* chapters do not agree with the *Gita*.<sup>24</sup> It is also significant that though the *Moksadharma* chapters elaborately discuss the *Samkhya* and the Yoga

systems, it does not refer to the Vedanta system at all. The Vedanta doctrine is discussed in the *Sanat-Sujatiya* and the *Gita*, the two texts on which Samkaracarya has commented.

A natural conclusion based on the discrepancies mentioned above would be that the chapters were written at different periods and that the *Gita* is the latest addition. (The *Sanat-Sujatiya* has not attracted much scholarly attention.) There is, however, another way of approaching the problem.

Let us suppose that the *Mbh* was written at a transitional stage. The *Vedas* had received their final shape, after which no alteration in their texts would be permissible. This was necessary, so that the *nastikas*—who are mentioned many times in the *Mbh* and condemned—might not alter its text in an attempt to traduce it. Even so, there were men who on various grounds were reluctant to accept blindly the authority of the *Vedas*. Someone shall have recently evolved the materialistic *Samkhya* doctrine, which in those days would be acclaimed as ‘a scientific doctrine.’ To counteract them, Vyasa may have formulated the *Vedanta-sutra* which is also known as the *Vyasa-sutra*, but it had not yet received recognition. (Actually the *Vedanta-sutra* or the *Brahma-sutra*, and the *Gita* received recognition only after Samkaracarya had written his commentaries). During a large part of this long interval, Buddhism held sway over the land, and *Samkhya* and *Yoga* developed.

An account, though unsatisfactory, of the philosophical thoughts current in the time of their birth is available from Buddhist and Jaina literature. Buddha himself took some training from two teachers, named, Alara Kalama (Sk. Arada Kalama) and Uddaka Ramaputta (Sk. Rudraka Ramaputra) who initiated him into *Samkhya* and *Yoga* systems respectively, but not in the classical doctrines. The *Brahmajalasutta* mentions sixty-two doctrines current at this time. The *Samannaphalasutta* and the *Suyagadanga* also give the same account of these heterodox sects. Their names are not always given and only very brief accounts of their doctrines survive. Some are merely labelled *anytaurthikas* (those who can cross the stream of transmigration by a ford other than Buddhism), or simply *tirthika*, and sometimes *tarkika* (*disputants*), a term found in the *Mbh* under various forms.

It may be pertinent, therefore, to inquire into the origin of these

diverse extra-Vedic opinions before Buddha. The *Mbh*, as we have stated above, shows a stage in the history of intellectual quest for truth which could not be satisfied with the Vedic doctrines, particularly of the *Karmakanda*. These may have developed in course of time for Buddha to have discovered more than sixty-two schools within a relatively confined area.

Remarking on the personal names found in the votive inscriptions on the Sanchi Stupas, G. Buhler remarked: 'The occurrence among the Buddhists of names connected with ancient Vedic religion as well as of such as are connected with Vaisnavism and Saivism, in these early inscriptions, has no doubt to be explained by the assumption that their bearers or their ancestors adhered to these creeds before their conversion, and that they received their names in accordance with the established customs of their families.... Their historical value consists therein that they form a link in the chain of evidence which enables us to trace the existence, nay the prevalence of Vaisnavism and Saivism not only during the third century B.C., but during much earlier times and to give a firm support to the view now held by a number of Orientalists, according to which Vaisnavism and Saivism are older than Buddhism and Jainism.'<sup>25</sup>

The *Mbh* is the only known pre-Buddhist text which pays homage to the cults of Siva and Visnu. The *Mbh* is usually labelled as a Vaisnava work, because it contains the *Gita* and deifies, or rather because it identifies Krsna with Visnu. Here we would like to observe that the *Gita* is a unique work, and can hardly be called a sectarian text, since Samkara—who is never called a Vaisnava—wrote its earliest known commentary. And if we leave aside the deification of Krsna, it will be found that Visnu and Siva have been given equal importance in the *Mbh* without any apparent sectarian bias. There is a *Visnusahasranama* (13.135.14-142), there is also a *Sivasahasranama* (13.17.30.171). In 13.145 and 146, Krsna himself explains to Yudhishthira the various names of Siva and their significance, and it is stated later that Krsna went to the Himalayas to pray for a son who would be born from Siva's and their significance, and it is stated later that Krsna went to the Himalayas to pray for a son who would be born from Siva's lustrous energy (13.126.35). There is no justification for assuming that the *Mbh* even in its present recension is a Vaisnava text, or that it reflects any conflict between the Saivas and the Vaisnavas.

As we have remarked above, the *Mbh* has the qualities of a drama: each character is allowed to state his point of view, which may be conflicting like that of Duryodhana and Vidura. Similarly every school of thought is allowed to present its doctrine by its own exponent. No view or doctrine is criticized. The task of arriving at a conclusion is left to the reader. Hence the discrepancies, which so much disturb a modern mind, are very prominent in the *Mbh*.

### Critical Edition of the Mahabharata

Before proceeding further, it is advisable to say a few words about the nature of the Critical Edition of the *Mbh*, published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. The scope of his achievement was succinctly put by Dr. Sukthankar in the following words in answering the question, 'what is the critically constituted text?': 'The Editor,' (that is Dr. Sukthankar,) 'is firmly convinced that the text presented in this edition is not anything like the autograph-copy of the work of its mythical author, Maharsi Vyasa. It is not, in any sense, a reconstruction of the *Ur-Mahabharata* or of the *Ur-Bharata*, that ideal but impossible desideratum. It is also not an exact replica of the poem recited by Vaisampayana before Janamejaya. It is further wholly uncertain how close it approaches the text of the poem said to have been recited by the Suta (or Sauti) before Saunaka and the other dwellers of the Naimisa forest. But it is a *modest* attempt to present a text of the epic as old as the extant manuscript material will permit us to reach with some semblance of confidence.'<sup>26</sup> As V. Pisani has observed, 'the editors have tried to reach the form which the poem had before its spreading through India...the archetype which stands at the basis of the different recensions and branches of tradition.'<sup>27</sup>

Though, modestly put, it has been a great achievement. We now have the best reconstructed text possible with all the variants. Many chapters have been rejected and many verses either rejected or reconstituted. So far as the *Mbh* text is concerned, a student is now on sure ground that a better text is not possible. This was denied to former scholars, and many of their criticisms have become automatically obsolete.

The Textual or Lower Criticism of the *Mbh*, and of *Ram* also, is complete. What remains to be done now is the Higher Criticism, that

is, identification of such passages which cannot be ascribed to the original (or reconstituted) text primarily on the basis of internal evidence. There are passages which have a definite MSS tradition but are palpably late, like these containing the names of tribes such as Huna, etc. These are clear cases and should be rejected. Some cases are debatable, like the Narayaniya section, which, the present author has shown elsewhere to be self-contradictory. There are, again, passages which can be traced to Manu. M.M. Kane is of the opinion that the *Mbh* borrowed these passages from Manu. But this needs examination to find out whether *Mbh* or Manu was the borrower, or did both derive their material from a common source. These and many other problems, too numerous to be mentioned here, have to be examined and resolved. The learned editors of the *Mbh* rigorously limited their task to within the limits permitted by Text Criticism. This was of course the correct attitude, but now one wishes that scholars like Dr. V.S. Sukthankar, Dr. S.K. De or Dr. S.K. Belvalkar had indulged in some Higher Criticism.

Now that the giants are no more with us, it seems that it will take a long-time before a successful Higher Criticism of the *Mbh* is produced. As for the *Ram*, one cannot but agree with Dr. Sukthankar's view. He went into the problem thoroughly and concluded that our *Ram* text was used as a 'source' by the diaskeuasts of the *Mbh* and that the *Ram* was composed during the interval which separated the *Bharata*,—that is Vaisampayana's version,—from the *Mbh*.<sup>28</sup>

### The Ramayana

The *Mbh* contains a large number of references to the *Ram*, and there are sixty-four verses in the *Ram* which have something in common with *Mbh*. 3.258 to 275. These chapters of the *Mbh* (3.258 to 275) relate the story of the *Ram* and are known as the *Ramopakhyana* chapters. Dr. Sukthankar went into the problem with his usual thoroughness and proved that *Ramopakhyana* was an epitome of the *Ram*.<sup>29</sup> Indeed the editors of the Critical Edition of the *Ram* have been guided to some extent by the *Ramopakhyana* chapters of the *Mbh*. Like the Critical Edition of the *Mbh* the Critical Edition of the *Ram* gives the best possible text approximating as nearly as possible the archetype; but Higher Criticism has been avoided.

### Scope of the Present Study

In the following pages we have attempted to study the socioeconomic background of the epics and a few other relevant topics and themes on the basis of the reconstituted texts of the epics. As we have already stated all the studies on the epics based on earlier texts have now to be discarded or modified in the light of the Critical Edition text. A better picture will emerge after the epics have been subjected to Higher Criticism. But that would mean the putting off the reaping the benefits of the Critical Edition. Moreover, the present study may be of help to scholars engaged in Higher Criticism by attracting their attention to certain aspects of the epics.

What would be the age of the socioeconomic milieu described below? We have given enough indications that it would be extremely hazardous to answer this question precisely. In general it may be observed that the sketch presented hereafter is of the pre-Buddhist society of North India. And one may not be far wrong to add, that it represents the development of post-Vedic India; in short that the canvas stretches from c. 1500 B.C. to c. 500 B.C. Indian society during this period was not exactly static. But at any time it moves slowly, and in those days, when modes of production and distribution hardly underwent any appreciable change, the economic factor which impinged on the social life may be said to have been constant. The stratification of society into castes also helped to maintain a state of stable equilibrium. Therefore, assumption of uniformity throughout the millennium may not be invalid or unjustified till it can be proved to have been otherwise.

Historical Sociology, sometimes called 'philosophy of history' uses historical data to formulate generalizations, with a view to explain historical states and processes. Ordinarily, the type of theoretical analysis should be concerned with facts that are, or are supposed to be known. With the aid of known facts, or data, one may marshal, interpret, explain relation between, and generalize. But sociological study of ancient Indian history, usually appears to be an art of reasoning on inadequate facts, claiming universal validity for certain propositions which are nothing more than applied logic, and sometimes historical facts are twisted to fit in with some theory, with the fervour of unintelligent dogmatism.

Like all modern scientific studies, sociology originated in the West, where its study is now rapidly developing. In those countries, the drudgery of finding data, though not over need no longer be the main occupation of historians. In India the main task of research is still not to analyze given facts, but find out what the facts actually were. Any theory necessarily based on limited data, must retreat before advancing factual knowledge, and must eventually be replaced with a new theory when data is plentiful.

There is also the 'pure' historical analysis. But some at least of the historians fall victims to the temptation of unravelling results as though they were the inevitable effect of an interplay of vectors, and of reconstructing the development as the successful or miscarried outcome of planning made respectable by the positing of an inner logic, which, it is overlooked, is inevitable only in retrospect. These 'historical theorists' are reluctant to admit not only the importance of causal factors other than the ones emphasized by their own theories but also the importance of chance in the evolution of actual pattern.

Another pitfall for historians is the acceptance of an absolute value as a criterion for judging all historical and social phenomena. This attitude involves an historic perception of cultural environment, for no theory can be absolute except in its specific historical setting, and even then the data must be adequate.

In the following pages we have tried to limit our attempt to the presentation of data as found in the two epics and their analysis. They relate the story of *kshatriya* princes narrated by *Brahmana* authors. Ordinary men and women seldom enter the stage, and then too casually. Of the two epics the *Mbh* is not only large, but very much richer as a source of information. As the *Mbh* says of itself:

*mahatvad bharavattvac=ca Mahabharatam ucyata*

(1.1.209)

[The work] is called *Mahabharata* on account of its greatness, prodigious size and weightiness'.

Both at the beginning and at the end, the *Mbh* (1.56.33; 18.5.38) claims for itself the merits of a thesaurus of knowledge:

*dharme carthe ca kame ca*



*mokse ca Bharatarsabha  
yad=iha=sti tad=anyatra  
yan=ne=ha=sti na tat kvacit*

(‘O best of Bharatas [*i.e.* Janamejaya] [information] on *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa* whatever is [incorporated] here may be found elsewhere; [but] what is not [to be found] here cannot be obtained anywhere else.’)

This immoderate statement is not a flippant self-assertion on the part of the narrator. The *Mbh* is indeed a cyclopedia of the four branches of human endeavour, of which we are here concerned only with *artha* and *kama*. It may be noted that *kama* does not exclusively stand for sex, but means desire, that is, that part of human motivation which leads to the satisfaction of all physical needs.

## II

As we proceed to the considered Kautilya’s conceptions most are of its governmental unity and compactive as regards the rights of the people—modern phrase—its socialistic internal. The chief feature of the Government its centralisation the arrangement various governmental agencies in number of well defined and internal departments effectively subordination a central will—that of the monarch. The several departments are presided over by the who over and above their has departments had a collections and alone or with others of king’s advisory body. They also supervised the departments regularly and daily reported their affairs to king. The most noticeable was the audit department, and so its character.

... The judiciary was separately organised in both its departments of civil and criminal jurisdiction, the former presided over by three lawyers and three ministers and the latter by three ministers or commissioners. The seizure and arrest of offenders were entrusted to commissioners and city superintendents, purely civil officers, who took no further part in the trial. The judiciary was separate from the executive and, we may take it, discharged its functions undisturbed by any executive bias or state interference.

The Arthashastra authorises wide interference of the government with the life and liberty of the individual subject. The area of state activity, as delineated is not in any way much greater than it was in

the States of Greece and Rome and mediaeval Europe in actual practice. Mines and forests were in the city state of Athens claimed and worked by the State. The regulations and restrictions with regard to trade, which are, however, set forth alongwith the principle that whatever causes harm or is useless to the country should be shut out and things which are of immense good grains, shall be let in free of toll and the rules with regard to the fixing of prices of merchandise, both imported and manufactured, are not without a parallel in the practice of European States in pre-*laissez faire* days. The few more regulations in the same spirit somewhat startling to a modern mind, prescribing the fees of prostitutes and State control of gambling which seem to be peculiar to the Kautilyan system may, however, be attributed to motives purely fiscal rather than those of reduce socialistic interference.

Municipal institutions of a popular character, village and town councils, trial by neighbours, trade and artisan guilds, find .... important place in Kautilya's scheme of monarchical administration, both judicial and executive. The liberal use of trial by neighbours is, perhaps, the most distinctive nature of the judicial administration as depicted by Kautilya. They are entrusted with jurisdiction over land and boundary disputes with rescission of improver sales and gifts with the administration and care of minors and of the properties of absent aparceners etc. with the sale and custody of pledges. The denial to them of participation in criminal causes is noteworthy.

### III

Arthashastra, partly due to the historic fame of its author and partly due to the novel rigour and unity of its thought, profoundly impressed itself on the political mind of ancient India. The grosser aspects of his political scheme, however, a terrible system of espionage, a profuse use of witchcraft and treachery, aggressive modes of war and alliance, an essentially depressing cult of personal rule with subservient tools and materialistic ends—these were features from which the mind of civilised, though deeply monarchical, India recoiled in latter times. Many of them quietly abolished and eliminated in subsequent practice. A greater dignity and power was assured to ministers; the system of spies was dropped; wars were conducted on more humane principles; and a true philosophy of people's happiness was propounded by the latter politicians.

The new and elevated conception of State find expression in Santiparvan. In it we find ourselves in a new world of political ideas instinct with poetry and religion and reflecting the ideals of a nobler and better-established empire State. *Santiparvan* belongs to the latter half of the imperial millennium and represents the glorious idealism of the Gupta age. Its discourses are pervaded by a supreme moral spirit and a regard for the happiness of peoples, purer and more outspoken than in the *Arthashastra*. Everywhere heroic strains and scriptural sentiments abound.

The governmental organisation in the *Mahabharata* is much of the same type as that found in the *Arthashastra*, consisting of a king and council and subordinate ministers and departments and a trained judiciary. The council is, however, constituted on a more elevated principle than in the *Arthashastra* and assumes an august and national character. It is not a mere body of men skilled in deliberation, mere political experts, men able to devise schemes. The *Mahabharata* makes the king's council a chosen body, a gathering of well-born and eminent men, representing the various orders of the king's subjects, four Brahmins learned in the law, eloquent, pure, eighteen Kshatriyas, armed and endowed with valour, twenty Vaisyas possessed of wealth, and three Sudras, humble and pure of life.

The idea of a high governing body of elite and high-born men, of chosen and worthy instruments of administration, is prominent throughout. While everywhere in the *Arthashastra*, we meet with the workings of the purely personal will of the monarch, every department and every officer simply carrying out his behests, we have in the Santiparvan the same monarchical concept, modified by the interposition of a collective body of chosen and high-born administrators and judges. While the governmental concept remains as deeply monarchical as ever, a fresh spring and source of action is apparent and a greater safeguard for securing national honour and prosperity is added by calling into the councils of the king, men of high resolve and action, ministers of unblemished character and patriotism.

A king, desirous of prosperity and of fame, should call into his council persons trustworthy, well-born, native to the kingdom, incapable of being, corrupted, unstained by vices, possessed of learning, sprung from sires and grand-sires of loyal service and adorned with humility.

They should be possessed of intelligence, free from pride, full of energy and patience, forgiveness, purity, loyalty, firmness and courage, mature in years, capable of bearing burdens and free from deceit. They should be possessed of heroism, full of resources, high born, truthful and free from cruelty, ever desiring the good of the king.

The king's acts should be preceded by deliberation in council thus composed. The king should harken to the voice of the many and not adopt the views of one. Where, however, that one person transcends the many in the possession of accomplishments, then the king may follow the one abandoning counsels of the many. A high executive thus composed of the elite and high-born men, supplies, however, imperfectly, a new principle of action to the purely personal type of monarchy and forms the most distinctive contribution of Santiparvan to Indian political thought...

The judiciary and its functions, those no details and institutions thereof are to be found in *Mahabharata*, are considering in the same spirit and on the full pattern as in the *Arthashastra*. In a powerful passage, the epic author gives sizes the importance of equal administration of justice, of the decision of controversy without bias or favour.

Thou shouldst never confiscate what is deposition with thee, appropriate as thine the thing of whose ownership two persons may dispute. Consider such as this would spoil the administration of just. If the administration of justice be thus injured, it will afflict thee and afflict thy kingdom as well as sight of the hawk. The kingdom will melt also like a boat wrecked on the sea. If a king and his subjects are unrighteousness, fear takes power over of his heart and the door of heavens is closed against him. A kingdom has its full righteousness. That minister or prince who is unrighteously occupying the seat of justice, and those officers who, having accepted the charge of affairs, act unjustly, moved by self-intended to sink in hell along-with the king himself.

... As regards the aim and functions of the State, the *Mahabharata* too puts forward a somewhat socialistic paternal view of the State, comprising not merely the service but also the moral government of its subjects. The village headman is asked to ascertain the characteristic of every person in the village and all the faults that

need correction. Taverse, public women, actors, keepers of gambling houses should be suppressed. There should be no beggars, no robbers, in the kingdom. The king who alone is competent to restrain and to check should restrain those subjects of his that are sinful and addicted to evil ways. Agriculture and cattle-rearing trade and other arts should be caused to be carried out by many persons on the principle of division of labour. And this wide patterned view of the State imperceptibly leads us more active and theocratic aims, the maintenance of caste and the active supervision and control of their duties and privileges. It is the duty of the king to see that the four orders attend to their respective functions,...wholesome barriers are maintained among them. A king so disposing and as governing, shines forth as author of righteousness and the maker of his age.

*(K.V. Ramaswami)*

#### IV

##### **Survival of Civilisation**

The Chinese and the Indian civilizations agreed with each other and differed from the others in one important point. They had both made sufficient advance in the third stage to establish equilibrium between the various forces which operate for material, intellectual and ethical development. As a certain amount of material development is the essential concomitant of cultural progress, the two sets of forces, one operating by a process which has been called cosmic and leading to the former, and the other working by a process which has been distinguished as non-cosmic and resulting in the latter, must act simultaneously in a civilised society. The forces which make for material progress prevail over those which operate for higher cultural development in the first stage of civilisation in which matter dominates the mind, and the outer or the animal life is thought more of than the inner or the spiritual. Their intensity and strength diminish in the latter stages with the increasing efficacy of the forces which operate towards intellectual and ethical culture, and the stability of a civilization depends upon whether equilibrium is eventually established between these two sets of forces.

Excessive material development inevitably leads to highly unequal distribution of wealth. As a consequence of this disparity,

society is divided into two classes—one, the smaller, rolling in wealth and luxury, and the other, much the larger of the two, grovelling in poverty and misery. Both of these classes being governed by no higher ideal than that of material development, no higher aspiration than the attainment of physical benefits, there is ceaseless jealousy and strife between them. Greece attained to the third stage, but did not make much progress in it. The extinction of her civilization is mainly attributable to this incomplete development of ethical and spiritual culture. The moral consciousness of Greece as exhibited by Plato, probably the best exponent of her highest culture, recognised four cardinal virtues,—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Aristotle's list of the principal virtues is based upon Plato. Neither altruism, nor even such restricted benevolence as would embrace the whole nation, has a place in either. The material element of the Greek civilization was never well-balanced by spiritual. Wealth had been made the criterion of social rank by Solon during the second stage of her civilisation; and that standard continued in the third. For several centuries, there was constant struggle between the rich and the poor, the Oligarchy and the Democracy. The ethical and spiritual culture of Greece was not sufficiently advanced to establish harmony and amity between them. They hated and incessantly fought one another for nearly three centuries. When the democratic party was in the ascendant, they sent the rich into exile or massacred them and confiscated their property. When the rich returned to power, they treated the poor in the same way. The centre of gravity now shifted to one side and now to the other, and temporary equilibrium was established, but only by the adjustment of the cosmic forces, not by the setting off of the cosmic against the non-cosmic. Thus there was continued loss of national energy and national solidarity, and the fabric of Greek civilization gave way through internal weakness. If Greece had succeeded building up a harmonious system of civilisation, if its material and spiritual elements had been sufficiently well-balanced, it would have survived the loss of her independence. As it was, it did survive her conquest by Rome for some centuries in Egypt and Asia Minor.

The baneful results of excessive materialism, especially of concentration of wealth within a small section of the community are well exemplified in the case of Rome. With the culture borrowed from Greece, she made some advance in the second stage of civilization, but she hardly even stepped into the third. She was immersed in the

grossest materialism. The brutal instincts of the people were displayed in their utmost hideousness in the bloody games of the amphitheater in all the important cities of the Roman Empire. Sometimes instead of placing armed men before the beasts in the arena, the animals were let loose on men who were naked and bound.

“The custom spread into all the cities of the empire compelling those condemned to death to furnish this form of entertainment for the people. Thousands of persons of both sexes and of every age, and among them Christian Martyrs, were thus devoured by beasts under the eyes of the multitude. But the national spectacle of the Romans was the fight of the gladiators (men armed with swords). Armed men descended into the arena and fought a duel to the death. From the time of Caesar as many as 320 pairs of gladiators were fought at once; Augustus in his whole life fought 10,000 of them; Trajan the same number in four months. The vanquished was slain on the field unless the people wished to show him grace. Sometimes the condemned were compelled to fight, but more often slaves and prisoners of war. Each victory thus brought to the amphitheatre bands of barbarians who exterminated one another for the delight of the spectators.”

“The accumulation of wealth and power in Rome gave rise to a universal depravity. Law ceased to be of any value. A suitor must deposit a bribe before a trial could be had. The social fabric was a fastering mass of rotteness. The people had become a populace; the aristocracy was demoniac; the city was a hell. No crime that the annals of human wickedness can show was left unperpetrated—remorseless murders; the betrayal of parents, husbands; wives, friends; poisoning reduced to a system; adultery degenerating into incests, and crimes that cannot be written. Women of the higher classes were so lascivious, depraved and dangerous, that men could not be compelled to contract matrimony with them; marriage was displaced by concubinage; even virgins were guilty of inconceivable immodesties; great officers of State and ladies of the court, of promiscuous bathings and naked exhibitions. In the time of Caesar it had become necessary for the government to interfere, and actually put a premium on marriage. He gave rewards to women who had many children; prohibited those who were under forty-five years of age and who had no children, from wearing jewels and riding in litters, hoping by such social disabilities to correct the evil. It went on from bad to worse, so that Augustus in view of the

general avoidance of legal marriage and resort to concubinage with slaves, was compelled to impose penalties on the unmarried—to effect that they should not inherit by will except from relations. Not that Roman women restrained from the gratification of their desires, their depravity impelled them to such wicked practices as cannot be named in a modern book. They actually reckoned the years, not by the Consuls, but by the men they had lived with. To be childless, and therefore without the natural restraint of a family, was looked upon as a singular felicity. Plutarch correctly touched the point when he said that the Romans married to be heirs not to have heirs. Of offences that do not rise to the dignity of atrocity, but which excite our loathing, such as gluttony and the most debased luxury, the annals of the time furnish disgusting proofs. It was said, ‘They eat that they may vomit, and vomit that they may eat.’ At the taking of Perusium, three hundred of the most distinguished citizens were solemnly sacrificed at the altar of Divus Jullus by Octavian! Are these the deeds of civilized men, or the deeds of cannibals drunk with blood?”

The extension of the Roman Empire and the excessive material development which it led to, brought into play several causes which resulted in the extinction of the Roman race and of the Roman civilization. We have just seen to what serious extent concentration of wealth led to gross extravagance and unbridled debauchery. A society so depraved cannot long hold together. For breeding true to race as well as to the best, it is imperative that the female stock should have a higher standard of chastity than the male, and that standard was debased to a degree in Rome.

The constant wars necessitated by the expansion of the Roman Empire also contributed to the extinction of the Roman race. Every year Rome lost a large number of true Romans on the field of battle. The brilliant conquests effected by these men added to the Roman domains and to the number of slaves. But such additions served only to demoralise and eventually to destroy the Roman people. The old Romans people consisting of small proprietors who tilled their own lands had been completely wiped out by the beginning of the Christian era. Many had died in the foreign wars. But Roman Imperialism proved a more potent cause for the disappearance of the Roman peasantry who had formed the backbone of the Roman State. When grain poured in from Sicily and Africa, it could no longer be produced by the small



proprietors of Italy at a remunerative price. They had to sell their lands to rich neighbours, who made great domains out of small plots; and it was truly observed by Pliny the Elder that "great domains are the ruin of Italy." The proprietors of the great domains found it advantageous to work them by slave-labour. So the old peasantry could find no work, and wandered about homeless. "The wild beasts of Italy," said Tiberius Gracchus, "have at least their lairs, but the men who offer their blood for Italy have only the light and the air that they breathe; they wander about without shelter, without a dwelling, with their wives and children. Those generals do but mock them who exhort them to fight for their tombs and temples. Is there one of them who still possesses the sacred altar of his home and the tomb of his ancestors? They are called the masters of the world while they have not for themselves a single foot of the earth."

"While the farms were being drained, the city of Rome was being filled with a new population. They were the descendants of the ruined peasants whom misery had driven to the city; besides these there were the freed men and their children. They came from all corners of the world—Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians, Asiatics, Africans, Spaniards, Gauls—torn from their homes and sold as slaves; later freed by their masters and made citizens, they massed themselves in the city. It was an entirely new people that bore the name Roman. One day Scipio, the conqueror of Carthage and of Numidia, haranguing the people in the forum, was interrupted by the cries of the mob. 'Silence! false sons of Italy,' he cried; 'Do as you like; those whom I brought to Rome in chains will never frighten me, if they are no longer slaves.' The populace preserved quiet, but these 'false sons of Italy', the sons of the vanquished, had already taken the place of the old Romans. This new plebeian order could not make a livelihood for itself, and so the State had to provide for it. A beginning was made in 123 B.C. with furnishing corn at half price to all citizens, and this grain was imported from Sicily and Africa. Since the year 63, corn was distributed gratuitously and oil was also provided. There were registers and an administration expressly for these distributions, a special service for furnishing provisions (the *Annona*). In 46, Caesar found 3,20,000 citizens enrolled for these distributions...This miserable and lazy populace filled the forum on election days and made the laws and the magistrates. The candidates sought to win its favours by giving shows and public feasts, and by dispensing provisions. They even bought

votes. This sale took place on a large scale and in broad day.... Poverty corrupted the populace who formed the assemblies; luxury tainted the men of the old families who composed the Senate."

The enormous increase in the number of slaves consequent upon the Roman conquests endangered the safety of the Empire. They received kind treatment from a few humane masters, such as Pliny, Seneca and Cicero. But generally they were treated with the greatest cruelty. "If a slave coughs or sneezes during a meal," says Seneca, "if he pursues the flies too slowly, if he lets a key fall noisily to the floor, we fall into a great rage...often we strike too hard and shatter a limb or break a tooth." One rich Roman used to punish his slaves for carelessness by casting them into a fish pond as food for lampreys. Women were not more humane. Ovid complimenting a woman says: "Many times she had her hair dressed in my presence but never did she thrust her needle into the arm of the serving woman." The slaves who displeased their masters were ordinarily sent to an underground prison. During the day they had to work loaded with heavy iron chains. Many were branded with red-hot iron. The mill where the slaves had to work is thus described by a Roman author: "Gods! what poor shrunken up men? with white skins striped with blows of the whip...they wear only the shreds of a tunic: bent forward, head shaved, the feet held in a chain, the body deformed by the heat of the fire, the eyelids eaten away by the fumes, everything covered with grain dust."

"Subjected to crushing labour or to enforced idleness, always under the threat of the whip or torture, slaves became according to their nature, either melancholy and savage, or lazy and subservient. The most energetic of them committed suicide: the others led a life that was merely mechanical...majority of them lost all sense of honour. The masters felt themselves surrounded by hate. Pliny the younger, learning that a master was to be assassinated at the bath by slaves, made this reflection. 'This is the peril under which we all live.' More Romans, says another writer, 'have fallen victims to the hate of their slaves than to that of tyrants. At different times slave revolts flamed up (the seville wars), almost always in Sicily and South Italy where slaves were armed to guard the herds. The most noted of these wards was the one under Spartacus."

We have considered above the internal risk to which a community engrossed in material pursuits is subject. The external dangers are even

more serious. Material aggrandisement exposes a—nation to constant attacks from outside—attacks by nations who have suffered by it, or by nations who wish for similar material development. Nothing excites greater jealousy, keener competition, and more insistent strife than such development. In this rivalry and struggle, newer nations have generally some advantage over the older, the latter being already debilitated by luxury and internal dissension, the inevitable results of the accumulation of wealth. It was thus that Greece was overpowered by Rome, and Rome by the Goths,—Visigoths and Vandals, Assyria was constantly at war with some neighbouring country, Babylonia, Syria, Palestine or Egypt. The conquered availed themselves of every opportunity to revolt, and the wars were repeated. The Assyrians were thus exhausted and fell an easy prey to a newer and more vigorous nation, the Medes. In B.C. 625 Nineveh, “the lair of lions, the bloody city, the city gorged with prey,” as the Jewish prophets called it, was taken and razed to the ground. “Nineveh is laid waste,” says the prophet Nahum, “who will bemoan her?”

The considerations which have been set forth above will make it clear to the reader how very difficult it is for a civilization to survive the first stage in which matter dominates the mind, and the physical life is valued more than the psychical. One probable reason why the Chinese, the Hindus, and the Egyptians were able to survive not only the first but also the third stage of civilisation is their isolation. The geographical situation interposed difficult barriers between them and the outside world. Then, again they were mainly agricultural peoples and were self-contained, depending but little upon foreign trade for material evolution, which is the necessary antecedent to intellectual or moral progress. Furthermore, they maintained their isolation artificially by an attitude of studied aloofness from everything foreign. When the King of Chow was offered a present at bounds by the people of Leu, he was dissuaded from accepting them by his adviser, who said: “A prince should not value strange things to the contempting things that are useful, and then his people will be able to supply all his needs....Even thus and horses which are not native to his country, he will not keep; fine birds and strange animals he will not nourish to his kingdom. When he does not look on foreign goods as precious, foreigners will come to him; when it is work which is precious to him; then his own people will enjoy repose,” “These maxims,” observes Professor Douglas, “which are held to embalm the highest wisdom,

have been carefully acted upon by all virtuous sovereigns, and, from a Chinese point of view, the effect has been excellent." ...Century B.C., when her ports were opened to foreign commerce. The case system of the Hindus served to maintain their isolation to a very large extent.

The longevity of a civilization is insured if it be well advanced in the third stage, if matter be brought well under the control of the mind and harmony between them is firmly established, just as in the case of the individual a ripe old age is the result of the establishment and maintenance of due harmony between his outer or animal life and his inner or spiritual life. The intellectual development of China was decidedly inferior to that of Greece or India, and in her spiritual and ethical ideals she was in a large measure influenced and inspired by India. The Drama has never flourished in China, and there is a great dearth of creative poetry. In her art also there is but little evidence of creative ability. There is profuse ornamentation, and close imitation of reality, but little of imagination and freedom Chinese pictures thus become mere "mirrored images of life". The literature of China never attained the higher reaches of Indian or Greek thought. But she reached the third stage of civilization in the first epoch during the reign of the Emperor Yaou (about B.C. 2356) and that of his successor Shun, succeeded in establishing harmony between her material and her ethical development. That harmony has since then been often disturbed, but whenever it has been disturbed, she has had sufficient recuperative power to restore it. The Chinese have been eminently practical. They have maintained the integrity of their civilisation by regulating the action of the cosmic and the non-cosmic forces so as not to be carried by either beyond the thick will of conservatism within which they early entrenched themselves. They have always kept their material development well under the control of the ethical. Their literature, though wanting in profound thought of vivid imagination, abounds in rules and maxims of life, in lessons of modernation, self-control and practical morality. With perhaps the single exception of Laotsze, who had a strong leaning towards mysticism, her thinkers were occupied more with practical ethics, with social and political conduct, than with abstruse questions of metaphysics. Neither Confucius nor his eminent follower Mencius (who lived about the close of the fourth century B.C.) was a philosophic recluse propounding theories in the seclusion of his study. They both eagerly sought to live in the courts of kings and put their theories about human nature, society and government into

practice, and Confucius was once afforded an opportunity of doing so and met with a certain measure of success.

The industrial activity of China has been great, but her ethical development has been equally great. The aim of her thinkers has even been to harmonise these two opposing forces. The honesty of a Chinese merchant is proverbial. His word is his bond. Books and pamphlets breathing a lofty spirit of benevolence, and containing moral maxims and injunctions, the quintessence of the teachings of her philosophers, are distributed broadcast among the people. Edition after edition of such pamphlets as *Kanying Peen* (or "Book of Rewards and Punishments") and *Yinchih Wan* ("Book of Secret Blessings") come out of the local presses at the demand of well-to-do philanthropists who take measures to disseminate copies among people who are too poor to buy them.

Since the third stage of the first epoch, benevolence has been the keynote of Chinese ethics. As early as B.C. 2435, the Emperor Kuoh is reported to have taught, that no virtue is higher than to love all men, and there is no loftier aim in government than to profit all men. Confucius taught, "what you do not want done to yourself do not do to others," and Laotse, like Gautama Buddha, and Jesus Christ five hundred years after them, enunciate the golden rule of social morality: "Recompense evil with good." The good of the people has been recognised at the sole *raison d'être* of a government ever since the first epoch. According to Confucius and other Chinese thinkers, a King, the Son of Heaven, but only so long as he governs on right principles for the good of his subjects. These principles have been defined, and the measure by which they are to be carried out formulated. Asked what should be done for the people, Confucius replied, "Enrich them," and asked what more should be done for them he answered, "Teach them." The requisites of government are given in the *Shooking* (—) "Food, trade, the maintenance of the appointed sacrifices, the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Instruction, the Ministry of Crime, arrangements for the entertainment of guest from afar, and provision for the support of the army." "Nothing has done more," observes Prof. Douglas, "to maintain the existing order of things than the old doctrine he (Confucius) enforced that sovereigns were placed on the throne by heaven, and that their right to the sceptre lasted only as long as they walked in the heavenly path, and obeyed the heavenly decrees. The departure from virtue was the signal for their condemnation, and

absolved their subjects from the duty of obedience. He thus implied the right, which Mencius openly claimed, of rebellion against impious rulers. Nor has this light been allowed to remain a dead letter. Upwards of thirty times have there been changes of daynasty since the days of Confucius, and on each occasion the revolution has been justified by references to the teachings of the sage and his great followed Mencius."

Wealth has never formed the criterion of social rank in China. With the single exception of India there is not other country where virtue and wisdom have been held in such esteem and reverence by the people. The worship of the sages, Buddha, Confucius and Laotsze, forms an important part of the religion of the Chinese. Ever since the third century B.C. the worship of Confucius has been as universal as the study of his works. The most important of the numerous temples dedicated to him is that adjoining his tomb in Shantung. It contains a tablet with the simple inscription—"The most holy prescient seft Confucius—His spirit's resting place." In the provinces there are some 1500 temples dedicated to the worship of Confucius and with him are associated his distinguished followers, Meng (Mencius) Yen, Tsang, and Tsesze. The emperor goes in State twice an year to the temple in Shantung "and having, twice knelt and six times bowed his head to the earth, invokes the presence of the sage in these words: 'Great art thou, O perfect sage! Thy virtue is full; thy doctrine is complete. Among mortal men there has not been thine equal. All kings honour thee. Thy statues and laws have some gloriously down. Thou art the pattern of this imperial school. Reverently have the sacrificial vessels been sent out. Full of awe we sound our drums and bells.'"

Ever since the first epoch China has been free from militarism. The profession of the soldier has ever been despised in China. He is placed last in her scale of social usefulness. She has never made a hero of any man whose sole title to distinction is success in warfare. The emperor of China was probably the only ruler in the world who never wore a sword.

Paradoxical as the statement may appear some, it was not her military strength, material development, but the harmony which she was able to bring about between it and her moral development at an early period of her history that has enabled China to preserve the integrity of her civilisation. The Chinese have been subjected to repeated invasions from outside. But, such is their moral vitality, that

though often conquered physically, they have never been subjugated mentally. They have invariably succeeded in incorporating the foreigners with their own social organization. It is owing to her moral force that China has displayed such a marvellous capacity of absorbing all foreign elements into the substance of her civilization, and has thus insured its stability. Tartars, Mongols, or Manchus, the foreign invaders after a time became Chinese of all intents and purposes. They all adopted the Chinese language, institutions and ideals and became ardent worshippers of Confucius and other Chinese worthies.

It is their ethical development which enabled the Hindus also to integrate the foreign elements into their system of civilization, and thus place it on a stable basis. It is when India reached the third stage that the racial cleavage between the Aryans and the non-Aryans began to disappear, and they were gradually fused into one race, known in history as the Hindu, inspired by the same ideals and worshipping the same gods and goddesses. While in the third stage India suffered repeated invasions from outside, by the Greeks, the Parthians, the Scythians and the Huns, who succeeded in establishing their authority in various parts of the country. Sooner or later, however, they were either expelled or became Hinduised, adopting the Hindu religion, the Hindu literature and the Hindu institutions. The Greek Menander who had his capital at Kabul (about the middle of the second century B.C.) became a convert to Buddhism and has been immortalised under the name of Milinda in the celebrated Buddhist work entitled "The Questions of Milinda." The Scythian (Kushan) Kadhaphis II was an ardent votary of Siva, and his successors, Kanishka and his son Hushka, were enthusiastic followers of Buddhism. The Pallavas of Parthian origin, who for four centuries were the premier power in Southern India, were completely Hinduised, and Kanchi (Conjeeveram) has since their time been one of the most important stronghold of Hinduism. The Saka (Scythian) Satraps of Surashtra (Kathiawar) adopted either the Brahmanical or the Buddhist cult of Hinduism.

The Hindus like the Chinese have ever since the third stage in the second epoch been pervaded but little by the military and the predatory spirit. Benevolence has always been with them one of the cardinal virtues. As in China, so in India, wealth never formed the basis of social rank, wisdom and virtue were held in the highest country were leaders of thought persecuted as they were in Greece. But India

differed from China in two important points. Indian thinkers were as markedly idealistic and other-worldly, as the Chinese were realistic and this-worldly. The former loved to live in retirement in the seclusion of hermitages taking but little interest in politics and in mundane affairs generally and elaborating systems of philosophy, which in respect of sublimity and depth of thought still remain unsurpassed, but the general tendency of which was to foster quietism and indifference to material development. The other noteworthy point in which the Hindus differed from the Chinese was their caste-system. In the beginning it was flexible enough to permit the admission of the lower into the upper classes. But it attained such rigidity towards the end of the third stage that the fissures between the different classes became almost impassable. It was mainly owing to their idealistic temperament and the caste-system, that the Hindus lost their political independence. The fighting caste, the Rajputs fought and fought bravely against the Moslem aggressors. No disgrace rankled more in their breasts than the disgrace of a defeat in battle. Rather than surrender they often died sword in hand. The Rajputs resisted, and resisted with all their might, but they never got the cooperation of the mass of the people, who considered the maintenance of government the business of the fighting caste with which they had no concern. As soon as the King and his army were defeated, there was an end of all opposition.

But the civilization of the Hindus survived the loss of their political independence; and the survival is attributable to their moral and spiritual culture which inspired them with sufficient courage to resist their conversion either by the sword or the allurements of material advancement. Hindu culture not only presented an impenetrable front of opposition to the disintegrating influences of Muhammedan invasion, but also in course of time captured the Moslem mind and largely influence Moslem culture and Moslem administration. We have already referred to the extent to which the Saracens were indebted to India for their medicine arithmetic, algebra, and chemistry.

Settled in India the Muhammedans gradually became partially Hinduised. The red for the propagation of Islam abated. The blind bigotry of the Moslem was gradually tempered by the philosophic culture of the Hindu, and Hindu influence on the religion and government of the Moslem gradually became more and more marked.

The brightest period of the Muhammedan Empire was



unquestionably the period between the accession of Akbar and the deposition of Shah-Jehan, and it was during that period that the Hindu influence was the strongest. Akbar set his most cultured Muhammedan courtiers the brothers Faizi and Abul Fazl,—wars greatly under Hindu influence. Abul Fazl in fact, was held by some of his contemporaries to be a Hindu. Akbar held the Hindu belief that it was wrong to kill cows and interdicted the use of beef. Two of Akbar's wives were Hindus; and Jehangir was the son of one of them. Jehangir had ten wives, of whom no less than six were of Hindu descent. Shah Jehan was the offspring of one of these. He had more of Hindu than of Muhammedan blood in him. It is said of Akbar that from his youth he was accustomed to perform the *Hom* (a Hindu ceremony) from his affection towards the Hindu princesses of his harem. These princesses gained so great an ascendancy over him, that he foreswore not only beef, but also garlic, onions, and the wearing of a beard. "He had also introduced" says the orthodox Badaoni, "though modified by his peculiar views, Hindus customs and heresies into the court assemblies, and introduces them still in order to please and gain the goodwill of the Hindus." Raja Bir Bal is said by some historians to have influenced Akbar in adjuring Islam. Bir Bal was the special favourite of Akbar. Badaoni says, "His Majesty mourned for the death of no grandee more than for that of Bir Bal." The jealousy which the pro-Hindu policy of Akbar excited amongst bigoted Muslims was intense, and finds expression in the writings of orthodox Muhammedan writers like Badaoni. The Hindu Man Singh, Todar Mall and Bir Bal, and the practically Hinduised Abul Fazl and Faizi were amongst the most, if not the most, trusted of Akbar's councillors. They probably contributed more to build up the Mogul Empire on a sound basis of liberal and enlightened policy than all the other officers of Akbar put together.

The pro-Hindu policy of Akbar was continued by Jehangir and Shah Jehan. The contest between Dara and Aurangzeb was really a contest between enlightenment and bigotry, between a pro-Hindu and an anti-Hindu policy. Dara belonged to the school of Akbar. He wrote a book attempting to reconcile the Hindu and Muhammedan doctrines. He had translations made of fifty *Upanishads* into Persian. Like Akbar, he was considered an apostate. He is said to have been constantly in the society of Brahman *Yogis* and *Sanyasis*, and to have considered the *Vedas* as the word of God. Instead of the Muhammedan, he adopted the Hindu name (*Prabhu*) for God, and had it engraved in Hindi upon

rings: "It became manifest," says the author of *Alamgir-nama*, "that if Dara Shikoh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the faith would be in danger." Aurangzeb was a bigot such as orthodox Muhammedans and long been looking for; they advocated his cause, as the Hindus did that of his elder brother. The cause of orthodox Islam triumphed. But the triumph was only temporary ending with the reign of Aurangzeb.

The Hindus did not sink into political non-entity even in those parts which directly owned Muhammedan sway. They were admitted into situations of trust and responsibility. They commanded armies, governed kingdoms, and acted as ministers under Muhammedan kings. Under Akbar, one Hindu (Todar Mal) occupied the high post of Minister of Finance, another (Man Singh) was raised to a distinction (commander of seven thousand) which up to his time had been reserved only for princes of the royal blood.

The Muhammedan conquest didn't seriously affect Hindu civilisation. During the Muhammedan period it was maintained as the level which it had attained during the third stage. Sanskrit learning was kept up at such places as Benares and Nadiya. If Sanskrit literature suffered a little for want of patronage, the loss was more than compensated by the marvellous expansion of the vernacular literatures. The loss was felt only by a few cultivated Brahmans, the gain was shared in by the great mass of the people. Writers in the vernaculars, such as Eknath and Tukaram in Maharashtra, and Surdas and Tulsidas in Northern India, drew upon the rich storehouse of Sanskrit literature and popularised the teaching of Hindu sages; and great religious teachers and reformers such as Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya sustained the ethical and spiritual life of the people. The material condition of the people was no worse than in pre-Muhammedan times. The artisans were certainly more prosperous than in any previous period. This prosperity was due partly to increased commerce with Europe, and partly to the taste for luxuries created by the Muhammedans. Europeans who travelled in India between the 15th and the 18th centuries all testify to the superiority of Indian over European manufactures and to the high degree of material prosperity enjoyed by the Indians.

The evidence we have adduced above shows, that the two civilizations which have survived to the present day agree in the fact

that their material element was subordinated to the ethical, and that the civilisations which have perished agree in the fact that their material development was disproportionately greater than the ethical. The cases especially of survival are no doubt too few to justify safe generalisation. The sociologist of the future epoches will no doubt have a larger number of cases to draw conclusions from. In the meantime, the facts at our command, I think, justify us in concluding that the survival of a civilisation depends upon its attainment of equilibrium between the forces making for material progress and those leading to ethical development. From the two cases of long-lived civilisations we have considered above, it would appear that after the attainment of this equipoise, further extension of life depends upon its maintenance. The equipoised condition is being constantly disturbed by various causes of which the animal tendencies of man are the most important—tendencies which lead him to think more of the outer than of the inner life. As in every community, however, civilised, there must be numerical preponderance of individuals in the first or the material stage of progress a slight diminution of the influence exerted by the small class composed of the wise and the good results in their gaining the upper hand and thus ensues moral degeneration. The red of the great men of China ever since reached the third stage in the first epoch has been not to strike out new paths but to bring back their community to the equipoised condition reached during that stage. Confucius always professed to be a transmitter. He trod in the footsteps of the great and good Yaou, Shun and others which had adored the third stage of the Chinese civilisation during the first epoch (about B.C. 2356-2000). The mantle of Confucius fell on Mencius who sought only to perpetuate the doctrines of his great master Chinese ideals of life have not appreciably varied ever since the days of Yaou and Shun. Similarly in India, her great men since the close of the third stage of her civilisation, from Sankaracharya and Ramanuja down to Rammohan Ray and Dayananda Saraswati have had no new message to deliver. Their function has been only to bring back the people to the old paths of ethical and spiritual development when they had strayed far from them. The mobility of the Chinese and Hindu civilisations ever since they reached the third stage has been restricted to the rotation of the equilibrium attained during that stage. That equilibrium has of late been violently disturbed by the import of the western civilisation and it remains to be seen whether the Chinese and the Hindu civilisation have sufficient vitality and recuperative power to restore it.

Intellectual culture is of supreme importance in the survival of a civilisation, if we have not made special mention of it above it is because such outline is impleme in real ethical and spiritual development. In our view of the evolution of civilisation such development presupposes antecedent intellectual development, the ethical stage being preceded by the intellectual. The introduction of high ethical ideals among peoples not sufficiently advanced intellectually to receive them does far more harm than good. During the "Middle Age," there was no country in Europe which took such a prominent part in that horrible system of persecution, the Inquisition, as Spain; and there was no country which was so earnestly and sincerely "Christian" as Spain, but at a time when it was not intellectually prepared for the grand ideals of the noble religion preached by Jesus Christ. The most enthusiastic and fanatical among the Saracens, brutally cruel because brutally ignorant, were no doubt moved by a desire for doing good to the unbelievers when they tried to convert these at the point of the sword.

There is a good deal of truth in the dictum of Socrates that "knowledge is virtue." The sages of India all taught, that the path of knowledge is the most commendable of all the paths to salvation, if indeed as according to some, it is not the only way. The noble eight-fold path prescribed by Buddha consists of eight principles—*right* belief, *right* aims, *right* speech, *right* action, *right* means of livelihood, *right* endeavour, *right* mindfulness, *right* meditation; and reason is our only guide in judging what is right and what is wrong? The Chinese thinkers were equally alive to the importance of knowledge as the surest foundation on which to establish the will. "At fifteen," said Confucius, "my mind was bent on learning. At thirty I stood firm. At forty I had no doubts. At fifty I knew the decrees of Heaven. And at seventy I could follow that my heart desired without transgressing what was right?" Confucius taught that "true knowledge should enable a man to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and to assimilate all that is good, and to discard all that is evil, on that which he learns. More than this, however, is required by him: he must love the truth as well as know, it and must delight in it as well as love it."

The conclusion to which we have been led in this chapter are as follows :

First. Civilisations in which the material elements prevails over

the ethical, are of an ephemeral character. They are like magnificent fabrics built upon quicksand, bound to give way sooner or later.

Secondly. The survival of a civilisation depends upon its attainment of an equipoised condition between the cosmic forces making for material progress and the non-cosmic forces leading to higher culture (especially ethical culture).

Thirdly. That the life of a civilisation after it has passed from one epoch to a later one depends upon the maintenance of this equipoise.

It follows as a corollary from these conclusions, that military, political and economic activities are of less significance in the life of a nation than high cultural activities.

These conclusions would appear to run counter to the prevailing western conception of social efficiency which posits strife and competition to be its only essential condition. There can be no doubt that this condition is imperative for animal efficiency and therefore for material advancement which is the destructive feature of the first stage of civilisation. The law of the "struggle for existence and survival of the fittest" governs the animals kingdom, and man so far as he is an animal is unquestionably subject to it. But so far as his moral and spiritual faculties, which differentiate him from animals, are concerned, their development is subject to laws of which we have no clear conception now but which are altogether different from those obtaining in the case of other sentient beings in as much as such development is essential for the survival of a civilisation, and it is fostered by what Herbert Spencer calls the "religion of amity" in contradistinction to the "religion of enmity," it is obvious, that the main condition of social efficiency is not perpetual strife, but rather a cessation of such strife, not physical but psychical strength, not the military and predatory spirit, but righteousness and benevolence.

## V

### **The Hindu Conception of Democracy**

Democracy is government of the people by the people, for the people. At a time when every government calls itself people's government, when democracies have become party governments and

not people's, when it is admitted that no government in the world can be called pure democracy and when it is feared that democracies may deteriorate into dictatorship, it is worthwhile to do a little rethinking about the concept of democracy.

In the present day world we see the rapid shifting of the centre of adjustment to the people as a whole in the so called democracies with a marked tendency developing in them as well as in other states for return of the power of control to the few or one. The wonder of it is that all are promoting these tendencies in the name of democracy, the people's government. Even people in the totalitarian countries willingly tolerate present privations with the ultimate hope of an early achievement of democratic rights for themselves and their progeny. Democracy has such a popular appeal because it is based on human nature, the yearnings of every individual. Everyone wanted to be free and aspires to the status of quality, if not of superiority with every one of his acquaintance. Though he does not expect absolute freedom and equality in a democracy, he hopes for both within reasonable limits. Should a government fail to maintain the harmony of the State in keeping with the inherent urges of citizens for liberty and equality, it may be said to have ceased to be a democracy and entered a phase of necessary change ultimately leading to the assertion of the people of their rights of freedom and liberty and a return to democracy. Democracy is the form of government for human beings and the other forms are either an index of a diseased society or a preparation for the final triumph of democracy.

Democracy is an ideal based on the equally ideal principles of equality and freedom. All democracies of the world are on the march towards the ideal, but they are on different stages of development according to the degree of equality and the freedom available to the citizens to achieve that equality. The degree of equality and freedom depends on the capacity of the citizens to harmonise within themselves the desire for both. If the present democracies are to rise step by step towards the ideal without any lapse into undemocratic governments, the citizens have to be re-educated to have a correct notion of the ideas of equality and freedom and to practise the ways of realising them.

This inherent urge for equality in man is a confirmation of the religious doctrine of the oneness of souls, Godness of liberated souls and spiritual brotherhood of man. It is this urge that has produced the

political doctrine of democracy with freedom as a condition necessary for the realisation of equality. Equality and freedom are the *Alpha* and *Omega* of democracy. The fundamental rights are amplifications of these. Means, methods and procedures adopted by democracies to achieve their ends are based on these principles though they may vary from State to State. The idea of parliamentary democracy on the British model has come into greater vogue of late. Many new democracies without the strength of the long British tradition of democratic life which contributes not a little to the successful and healthy growth of democracy in British and even some of the old show signs of deviation from the democratic way. The wrong notion that democracy is majority rule, the increasing rigidity of political parties, the idea of Opposition for opposition sake forgetful of the principle of co-operation implied in the third ideal of Fraternity necessary for the growth of democracy and the growing faith that parties Opposition are the essentials of Parliamentary democracy have begun to unsettle the body politic of democracy with their appeal for selfish power dominating individual and parties. The party system shows signs of assuming all the faults of narrow communalism. The excesses detailed above though justifiable on grounds of expediency sins against pure democracy which is government by people and not by parties, by the natural method of co-operation and not by a permanent and rigid Opposition. In parliamentary democracy which really means democracy by discussion, without "dialogue" of some kind no government can function—the urge for equality among the representatives will not only create plenty of opposition, the warp and woof of discussion, but will also readily supply a Cabinet to supplant another provided that the people and their representative clearly understand and strictly adhere to the principles of equality, freedom and fraternity. In British Parliamentary democracy, the idea of equality originated as political equality and has developed into equality in every matter contributory to the welfare of the people. Political equality cannot but lead to the demand for economic equality. Socialism is the offspring of democracy. Every State is now socialistic. Every citizen is made to claim equality as a birth right.

The majority in the State being the 'haves', equal distribution of wealth among citizens at the expense of the 'have-nots' is the long-term policy of every democracy. Even if economic equality is established, absolute equality will ever remain an unrealisable ideal goading men and nations to more and more competition and greater and greater

selfishness making it impossible for men on earth to live in peace. That is why some go to the extent of saying that the principles of equality and freedom as essentials of democracy are vague. Urged on by the philosophy of satisfaction of desires as the goal of man, and the innate urge for equality in everything, humanity is in danger of losing democracy. Can the general philosophy of life still having a sub-conscious hold on the average Hindu, namely that the control of desires leading to their complete renunciation is the goal of life, solve the problem? There can never be in a State equality among the citizens though satisfaction of desires not as a result of complete renunciation. It is foolish and chimerical to conceive of such equality for the functioning of democracy. All desires are usually selfish, but people generally understand and appreciate the selfless desire resulting in unselfish actions. Urged by such a desire one is even ready to lose his life. You can conceive of equality in selfishness, unselfishness, among the citizens of a State. One has a glimpse of such a possibility on occasions of great national calamities Democracy can function satisfactorily only when the citizens and their representatives vie with one another for equality in selflessness in common parlance, unselfishness. When by a process of democratic education and tradition, at least fifty per cent of the citizens are unselfish, the time will be ripe for the dawn of true democracy. Equality among citizens can also be achieved when one is able to identify himself with others through Love which in other words is again losing one's self in the greater self of the nation. Selfishness is the keynote for the success of democracy. Equality in unselfishness is the real equality characterised as one of the essentials of democracy.

Inherent urge in man for freedom is a corollary to his urge for equality. Equality is the essential for democracy, and freedom is the means. The idea of freedom is a complicated abstraction in the minds of many and therefore vague but the feeling for it is intense and is highly inflammable. Absolute independence is not for man or even for states. Man likes to be independent, but he cannot achieve it without the help of others. Recognition of this fact and of the inevitability of the curbs on his freedom are attitudes essential for the citizens of a democracy. The urge for freedom is so strong in man that it often passes beyond the poles of civil liberty, sometimes with ample justification.

Maintenance of a healthy civic atmosphere for freedom to fructify is an essential feature of democracy. Freedom to obtain maximum



satisfaction of the maximum desires possible has become the craze of mankind. Religions which advocate control of desires as the path of salvation are losing their hold on the people. Hindu philosophies of the various schools advocate in unison that control of desires is the path to freedom. Liberation or "*Moksha*" aimed at by these schools is metaphysical and can be called self-realisation through the complete renunciation of the lower self of desires. Though such a goal will be disdained by the present generation with the exception of a scanty few, even they cannot fail to grasp if they care to discipline themselves in introspection that at the moment of their greatest achievement or joy, the performers are forgetful of their self and are selfless. It is common experience that self-consciousness is a bar to efficient performance. Even if this haven of selfless freedom is unreal to them, they will admit that though freedom is necessary for progress, self-control is the fountain head of civilization. Government, rule by an external authority, is necessary as people are not sufficiently disciplined in self-control; but for government as harmony which pure democracy is, the citizens ought to maintain within themselves the harmony between freedom and control. Self-control thus becomes the second virtue of a democratic citizen to be worthy of freedom.

Fraternity is classically the third essential for democratic. Equality is the essential for democratic harmony, liberty is the means to attain it and fraternity is the method of retaining it. Fraternity is a family virtue. Equality and freedom among brothers of the same family, though not in age and absolute, brings about this fraternity. When selfishness and intense individualism have unloosened the family ties, when quarrels and resentful differences among brothers are tending to mar the harmony in families the idea of fraternity as the basis for democracy has become vague to most. Fraternity is paradoxically the cause and effect of co-operation among brothers. As a basis for democracy, it is the co-operative aspect of fraternity that is most conducive to harmony. It is almost synonymous with co-operation. It is worthy of note that equality and freedom of the participants are necessary for their co-operation. It is through the process of automatic co-operation among the units of life that harmony is maintained in organisms. Co-operation is the third factor essential for democracy. It is becoming emphasised in international politics. Resistance will figure in human co-operation but overemphasis on opposition in Parliamentary democracies is unnecessary and injurious to the promotion of democratic harmony.

When parties unscrupulously whet the appetite of the voters for more and more desires, when every politician mouths socialism and welfare, flood gates of incessant demands for satisfaction in the name of democracy are thrown wide open and social and political disturbances leading to anarchy have become the common feature engulfing most of the democracies. At such a time, the findings of Hindu Philosophy are capable of at least serving the purpose of an antidote to the menacing growth of selfishness in individuals, parties and nations. They can help the growth of democracy from the harmony to greater harmony and lay the foundation for world government and world peace. Hindu ideals are not the property of Hinduism only. Other religions and cults have also been advocating and practising them. A fresh evaluation of the foundations of democracy and a research on the bearing of religion on it have now become imperative. Education for democracy is a subject worthy of a new faculty in every University. Unless there is a new orientation in educational theory and practice in general and especially on Education for Democracy, the growing craze for technological education and national superiority is likely to lead to the destruction of democracies and humanity. Hindu concept of democracy can still save the world.

(V. Veeraslingam)

## VI

### Studies in Economics of Ancient India

#### *Divisions of Learning in Ancient India*

In ancient India the Vidyas or Branches of Learning were variously grouped for various purposes, sometimes into four, sometimes into fourteen or eighteen in number. Thus the four fundamental branches into which all knowledge was divided were *Anviksiki*, *Trayi*, *Vartta* and *Dandaniti*, commonly rendered into English as Philosophy, the three *Vedas* Economics and Polity.

“*Anviksiki*, *Trayi*, *Vartta* and *Dandaniti*,—these are the four eternal branches of knowledge that conduce to the happiness of corporeal beings.”

Similar enumerations of the four primary Vidyas lie scattered throughout the vast field of Sanskrit literature from the *Ramayana* and

the *Mahabharata* downwards to the different *Dharmashastras* and *Puranas*. In fact, it is not always that all the four *Vidyas* find mention by name, for many implied or allegorical references to them are also to be met with. Thus in the *Mahabharata* (XII 318, 34-5, 47) *Anviksiki* has been called the fourth (*Caturthi*) *Vidya*. In explaining the passages in question the commentator Nilakantha makes no mistake in mentioning the names of the remaining three. Similarly in his *Nyaya-bhasya* Vatsyayana also mentions *Anviksiki* as the fourth *Vidya*. So also in the *Ramayana* (II.100.68) only three *Vidyas* (*tisrah vidyah*) are referred to. Again, in another passage of the same work (III.185) the attainment of the fruits of the four *Vidyas* have been mentioned as one of the merits accruing from bathing at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. Surely, the four *Vidyas* can be no other than those we are discussing. The *Nitisara* of Kamandaka has a description of a tree of Polity of which the four *Vidyas* have been called the four roots,—“He is indeed a real politician who knows the tree with eight branches, four roots, sixty leaves, two props, six flowers and three fruits” (VIII.42). Similarly, again in the *Yuktikalpataru*, the different *Vidyas* have been compared to the branches and flowers of a tree. In the beginning of the work, the reason why it has been called a tree has been thus explained: “The root of this tree is *Dandaniti*, (Polity), the stem is *Jyotisa* (Astronomy and Astrology), the various *Vidyas* are its branches and flowers, its fruits are unknown and its sap is nectar to the good, *i.e.* promotes their welfare.” (S.S. 6-7).

The branches of knowledge were thus primarily divided under four fundamental heads, *viz.* *Anviksiki*, *Trayi*, *Varitta* and *Dandaniti*. But there were differences of opinion among various schools about their relative importance. Different schools held different branches of knowledge as useless or but subdivisions of the one or the other of them, and thus sought to reduce the number of *Vidyas*. Kautilya met the views of these prior writers in the course of his work and sought to refute them. The arguments both for and against maintaining the number of *Vidyas* at four may appear, however, jejune to the modern world from the present day view point. According to the school of the *Manavas*, the sciences are only three in number, for *Anviksiki* is nothing but a special branch of the *Trayi*. The *Barhaspatya* school sets down the number of sciences at only two, *viz.* *Varitta* and *Dandaniti*. They eliminated the *Trayi* on the ground that the three *Vedas* were merely an abridgment or pretext (*Samvarana*) to a man, expert in wordly

affairs. The school of Usanas holds that there is only one science in the world, viz., the science of Polity and that in it all other branches of knowledge have their origin and end. It does not mean, however, that these different schools of political thinkers totally denied the existence of one or more of the Vidyas, but the truth lies in the fact that according to the views held by them these latter had no independent existence as branches of knowledge. They were therefore mere appendages of the Primary Vidyas according to their view point.

After giving the opinion of his predecessors Kautilya expressed himself in favour of maintaining the number of the Vidyas at four and only four, from which, according to him, all that concerns righteousness and wealth could be learnt. These four branches of learning thus divided between them the whole field of human knowledge and stood on a level of equal importance. In fact, the four primary Vidyas were so wellknown and their importance to man was so thoroughly recognised that it came to be considered that there could not be any normal earthly community that did not possess them.

The ancient writers in their conception of a state of perfect bliss and happiness, far away from the toils and miseries of the world, sometimes mention as necessary conditions among many others that the different orders and classes of society, their various occupations and the four sciences have no existence there. Similar descriptions of the various Dvipas are also given by the *Matsya Purana*. Thus in one passage (122.99) it says that the Kusa, Kraunca and Salmali, Dvipas are devoid of the *Varnas*, *Asramas*, *Vartta*, the Planets, Moon, malice, jealousy and fear. In another passage (123 23-4) it says that in the last three of the seven, Dvipas truth, falsehood, righteousness, unrighteousness, *Vartta* of the different *Varnas* and *Asrams*, cattle-breeding, commerce, agriculture, the three *Vedas*, *Dandaniti*, servitude, punishment, rain, rivers, heat and cold have no existence.

The supreme importance of the four Vidyas was so firmly rooted in popular mind that in course of time the different deities came to be associated with and became indivisibly identified with them. The best illustration of it is the case of the Goddess Durga among whose different appellations we find the names of the four fundamental branches of learning mentioned. Thus she was known by the names of *Trayi*, *Anviksiki*, *Vartta*, and *Dandaniti*, and the reasons why she is called so is also set forth in the hymns addressed in praise of her? So also in

the *Visnu Purana* (I.9.118-9) the Goddess Lakshmi has been praised as being herself the different *Vidyas* *Anviksiki*, *Trayi*, *Vartta*, and *Dandaniti*. In the *Devi-mahatmaya* of the *Candi*, or to be more accurate in the *Markandeya-Purana*, of which it forms but a part, the Devi has been called *Trayi*, for she protects men from the worldly woes and *Vartta* removes the troubles of the created beings (Ch. 84.18). Again in another passage of the same *Purana* the different *Vidyas* and *Kalas* are said to be but manifestations of Herself. In explaining the passage the commentator quotes the verses I.9.118-9 and III. 6,28-8 from *Visnu Purana* and gives the number of *Kalas* as sixty-four.

The hold that the fourfold division of the *Vidyas* had got over the minds of the ancient writers in India is best illustrated by the fact that in describing the encyclopaedic character of any voluminous literary work it is often said that it embraced the four sciences within its fold. Various other classifications of *Vidyas* were made in ancient times, sometimes into fourteen, sometimes into eighteen, often into thirty-two, and at times again into a still larger number. One authority, however, very wisely lays down that the *Vidyas* are nearly innumerable. The celebrated grammarian Patanjali (Circa 150 B.C.) has a *Varttika* to show the use of a special affix to denote study of texts to various kinds of knowledge the names of which end in the terms *vidya* or *laksana*. From Sanskrit Literature we come to know the names of a large number of such subsidiary *Vidyas* such as *Asva-Vidya*, *Sarpa-Vidya*, *Megha-Vidya*, *Naksatra-Vidya*, *Brahma-Vidya* and others. It is, however, apparent that the term *Vidya* here, as also in the lists that divide all *Vidyas* under fourteen or eighteen heads, cannot have the same significance as the term has when it gives the number of primary branches of learning as four and only four. It will be found upon ultimate analysis that all these subsidiary *Vidyas* are reducible to the four fundamental heads. Under the circumstances, it appears, therefore, not only convenient but also imperative to take the term *Vidya* of the enlarged lists in the sense of "lore," rather as branches of knowledge which were only four in number.

The fourteen *Vidyas* were the four *Vedas*, their six *Angas*, *Mimansa*, *Nyaya*, *Dharmashastra*, and the *Purana*, while the four additional sciences that raised the number to eighteen were *Ayurveda* (Medicine), *Dhanurveda* (Archery), *Gandharvaveda* (Music), and *Arthashastra*, taken to be *Upavedas* or supplementary works to the *Rk*,

*Yajus, Sama and Atharva Vedas* respectively. However, eighteen became the traditional number of the Vidyas with the Indians. And Madhusudana Saraswati, a late mediaeval scholar of great erudition, followed the same classification of the sciences in his *Prasthanabheda* or "Manifoldness of methods."

In the Pali Buddhist literature also, we meet with a similar division of knowledge under eighteen heads. The Jatakas contain many references to the three *Vedas* along with the eighteen sciences (*Sippas* or *Vijjathanani*) as acquired by students of those days. It is true that the Jatakas do not themselves mention the names of the eighteen sciences. That they cannot be wholly identical with the Brahmanic classification is apparant from the fact that the three *Vedas* find separate mention. However, there is no sufficient reason to hold that on the whole the two systems did not approximate to each other.

We find, however, a much more enlarged list of Vidyas in the *Sukraniti*. It has been wisely remarked by the author or authors of the work that the Vidyas and Kalas are really innumerable hence cannot be counted. But the number of the primary Vidyas is thirty-two and of the Kalas is sixty-four. The *Sukraniti* draws a characteristic distinction between the two—"Vidya is that which can be uttered while Kala is that which can be done even by the dumb." The distinction between Vidya and Kala is therefore all the difference between Science and Art as one should say these days. We shall treat of the Kalas later on. The different Vidyas as given in the *Sukraniti* are,—the four *Vedas* and their *Upavedas*: *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda* and the *Tantras*, the six *angas*, *Mimansa*, *Tarka*, *Samkhya*, *Vedanta*, *Yoga*, *Itihasa*, *Smrtis*, Theory of Sceptics, *Arthashastra*, *Kamashastra*, *Silpashastra*, *Alamkara*, *Kavyas*, *Desabhasa* or the languages of the country, *Avasokti* or the art of speaking properly, *Vavana* philosophy and manners and customs of countries and actions.

The Jaina literature gives a still larger list of sciences. In the *Kalpasutra* we find the Arhat Rsabha saying that during his reign he taught the seventy-two sciences, sixty-four accomplishments of woman, one hundred arts and three occupations of men. Be that as it may, whether the number of Vidyas be placed at fourteen, eighteen, thirty-two or even at any larger number, it will be found, as we have said already, upon ultimate analysis that they are all reducible to the four fundamental branches into which the ancient Indians primarily divided

their field of knowledge. *Kamandaka* (II.13) reduced the first fourteen Vidyas under one single head, the *Trayi* or Theology. So it is proper to take the term Vidya in this enlarged sense, to mean 'lore', and the 'Sippam' and 'Vijjathanani' of the Jataka stories in the sense of 'arts' and 'sources of human learning'. Thus we restrict the meaning of Vidya as branch of knowledge only to the four primary heads. There can be no doubt about the fact that the division of the whole field of human knowledge under four primary heads was based upon a thoroughly systematic and accurate principle and served best the purposes of the people who made it.

## VII

### Nature and Scope of Vartta

The word Vartta is derived from the root *vet* by the addition of the suffix VI: Thus Vartta, etymologically represents *vrtti* or means the means of livelihood specially allotted to the Vaisyas or the third members of the Aryan social grade. And no wonder, for we are to remember that in ancient times the Vaisyas were none else but the great mass of the Aryan community apart from the sacrificing and the fighting classes; and these had to carry on all wordly callings relating to the production of wealth. What these callings were, or, what is equivalent to the same thing, what the group of occupations denoted by the term Vartta was we shall come to see latter on in detail; suffice it to mention here that the functions of the Vaisyas were primarily divided under three heads, *viz.* Agriculture, Cattle-breeding, and Commerce. Alongwith the use of the term *vartta* as a collective name for the occupation of the Vaisyas it was also used, as has been seen already, as the designation of a division of learning pertaining to knowledge relating to those occupations. It is thus apparent that the attainment of Vartta to the status of a Vidya could only take place at a time when the different means of livelihood came to be allotted to the different castes.

Vartta is thus used in two different senses in Sanskrit Literature. In the primary sense, it stood for the group of occupations specially set apart for the Vaisyas. The secondary meaning of Vartta follows from the primary one, and the science that had Vartta as its subject of study came also to receive that appellation. We shall now see what was conceived to be the proper scope of Vartta. Perhaps it will not be

uninteresting to mention it along with those of the other three sister sciences as the ancient thinkers in India took them all to have been.

According to Kautilya righteous and unrighteous acts are known from the *Trayi*, gain and loss of wealth' from *Vartta*, right and wrong policies from *Dandaniti*, Kautilya's passage describing the normal provinces of the Vidyas may be given thus,—“Inasmuch as philosophy examines (religious) merit and demerit in Theology, profit and loss in the science of Industries, right and wrong policies in State Craft and also discusses, with reasons, the relative importance of these (three sciences), it serves mankind, gives correct insight into prosperity and adversity, and lends, sharpness of intellect and cleverness in business methods. What Kamandaka has to say about the nature of the four Vidyas is nothing but a mere versification of the words of his political Guru (II.7; Also *Angi Purana*, 238.9).

In the *Sukraniti*, the spheres of the sciences are somewhat increased, probably because of the changes due to the circumstances brought about by time. According to the view preserved in that work, *Anviksiki* comprised *Tarkavidya* (Logic) and Vedanta also. While virtue and vice as well as interests and injuries of man are based on the *Trayi*; profit and loss of wealth on *Vartta*; and good and bad government on *Dandaniti*.” In conclusion the author or rather the authors of the work have not forgotten to add that all classes of men and all the stages of human life are built upon of these branches of knowledge.

*Vartta* was thus the branch of learning that had wealth for its subject of study. In other words, it was the science devoted to the systematic study of the material interests of the people with a view to their pursuit and development.

Now we shall try to show that *Vartta* was originally the special function of the Vaisyas, and so the knowledge relating to the occupations to the Vaisyas, primarily constituted the science of *Vartta*. But later on, as we shall also see, the scope of *Vartta* as well as the occupations of the Vaisyas came to be widened and the functions of the Sudras also came to be included within the science. Thus after its fullest expansion the science came to include all subjects bearing on wealth within its fold.

The *Mahabharata* in a characteristic passage describe the nature of the different Vidyas. Therein it has been said that the *Trayi*,



*Dandaniti* and *Vartta* are meant for the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas respectively and that a man proficient in his own Vidya is able to gain his livelihood by the proper application of his learning in practical life. It has been further said that without be *Trayi* there would have been no trace of righteousness on earth, that anarchy would have been rampant had there been no *Dandaniti*; and lastly that in default of *Vartta* mankind would have disappeared from the face of the earth. It is only upon the proper application of the knowledge derived from the various Vidyas each in its proper line that man tends to walk in the path of virtue.

Just as the means of livelihood of the Vaisyas were originally taken to be only three, viz. Agriculture, Cattle-breeding and Trade, so also in its primary conception *Vartta*, comprised those three subjects only. Thus it has been said by Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* that is 'Agriculture, Cattle-breeding and Trade constitute *Vartta*'. Kamandaka also writes to the same purport thus. "The occupation of those who live by rearing cattle and by cultivation and trade is called *Vartta*. Well up in *Vartta* a man has nothing to be afraid of for his livelihood" (II.14). In the *Ramayana* (II.100.47) among the questions put by Rama to Bharata when the latter came to the forest to take him back to Ayodhya, we find one typical query pertaining to *Vartta*. Rama inquired of Bharata whether his agriculturists and cowherds, in fact, people well up in *Vartta*, were prospering in this world. *Visnu-Purana* in a characteristic passage mentions the fact that *Vartta* comprised three occupations; Agriculture, Trade, while the third was made up by cattle-tending.

The same fact is also to be known from the Jain canonical works. We have already seen the testimony of the Jain *Kalpasutras* wherein we find that the Arhat Rsabhadeva taught for the benefit of the world the seventy-two sciences, the sixty-four accomplishments of women, one hundred Arts and the three occupations of men. Surely these latter could have been no other than the three occupations of the Vis, with which we have by this time become familiar. The fact that these occupations were taught to people is sufficient evidence that *Vartta* in its primary sense had risen to be a branch knowledge. So also in the Buddhist *Petavatthu* it has been said that in the Petaloka there is no cultivation, no cow-keeping nor any trade or industry by which *petas* can live. From these and numerous other references scattered

throughout various works it is apparent that the topics that came within the purview of the science of *Vartta* were naturally these three means of livelihood that were included within *Vartta* in its primary sense of occupation. However, its scope was not always limited to those three subjects only, but became gradually much wider. In this way *Kusida* i.e. usury or lending of money at interest came to be included within the scope of *Vartta* just as it also became, as we shall see later on, one of the *Vattis* or means of livelihood of the Vaisyas. Thus in the *Bhagvata-Purana* (x.21.21) *Vartta* has been said to be fourfold (*Chaturvidha*) viz. *krsi*, *vanijya*, *goraksa* and *kusidam*.

*Suktaniti* also says that in *Vartta* are treated interest, agriculture, commerce, and preservation of Cows. The man who is well up in *Vartti* need not be anxious for earnings (1.311-12). In explaining the verse (IV.18) of the *Devinalamya* of the *Candi* or rather of the *Markandepi Purana* of which it forms but a portion, the commentator has explained the word *Vartta* as and says that the *Vrttis* are. So also does he explain the word *Vrtti*, in another *Sicka*. So *Vartta* came to include four subjects, Agriculture, Cattle-breeding, Trade and Lending money at interest, which functions are also repeatedly referred to in ancient works as the occupations of the Vaisyas, as we shall come to see in a subsequent chapter presently.

Originally the various arts and crafts did not pertain to the three twice-born classes, but belonged to the Sudras. It is but a common knowledge from history that in the division of labour among all communities whether in the East or in the West, in ancient or modern days, all the higher and honourable professions are appropriated by the conquering or dominating classes while the menial occupations and those involving manual labour are left to the Helots, Plebeians, Serfs or Sudras. So then in the original conception of *Vartta* the arts of crafts (*Silpa* or *Karukarma*) did not enter into it, as they belonged to the province of the Sudras, while *Vartta* was the function of the Vaisyas. This appears from the distinction, between *Varttopaya* or methods of *Vartta* and *Karmaja Hasla-Siddhi* or arts and crafts involving manual labour and dexterity, made in some of the *Puranas*, e.g. in *Visnu-Purana* (I.6.20) and in *Markandeya Purana* (49.73). The separate mention of the two is sufficient evidence that originally the various arts and crafts were not included within *Vartta*—a fact borne out to a remarkable extent by the testimony of no less a personage than the great Kautilya himself.

When we come to consider the various professions followed by the Sudras we shall find that his work is the only authority in the vast field of Sanskrit Literature that lays down that *Vartta* was one of the duties prescribed for the Sudras. But he also specifies their other professions which constitute the proper duties of the Sudras according to the orthodox viewpoint, viz. service to the twice-born classes as well as the profession of handicraftsmen and bards. This is sufficient proofs that *Karukarma* or industries and crafts were primarily excluded from the scope of *Vartta*.

But in the gradual widening of the field of *Vartta* the various industries also came to be comprised within it. In the *Devi-Purana*, *Karmanta*, i.e. manufacture, has been added to *Vartta*. So also in the *Mahabharata* (XII. 167. 10-11) the various arts and crafts (*vividhani Silpani*) have been included within *Vartta*. Therein we find that Arjuna, who has been characterized as an expert in Arthashastra, (*Arthashastra-visarada*) in reply to a query by Yudhishthira about the relative importance of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksa* expresses himself in favour of the second object of life. He says that this world is a land of action where Agriculture, Trade, Cattle-tending and the various Arts and Crafts find favour. The inclusion of manufacture or industries within *Vartta* was but a natural step in the process of the evolution and growth of that Science, for an art or occupation with any amount of economic significance could not but form part of the science that dealt with wealth.

Thus after its fullest expansion *Vartta* came to include all branches of knowledge bearing on wealth and thus became the highest category relating to the material interest of the people, with a view of their pursuit, acquisition and development.

As *Vartta* was primarily the occupation of the Vaisyas, it is but natural to suppose that from a detailed account of the function of the Vaisyas from the orthodox viewpoint we can get a concrete and definite idea about the scope of *Vartta* as it was conceived by the ancient writers of India. We are indebted to the Code of Manu for such a description. A brief summary of the passage will suffice to show that arts and occupations had come to be conceived of as what the Vaisyas should know and hence as proper subjects of *Vartta*. Thus it is said that the Vaisyas should be always engaged in *Vartta* such as dairy farming, for the Lord made over the animals to his care. They should have

knowledge of the prices and qualities of jewels, pearls, corals, iron and other metals, woven cloths, fragrant substances and articles used as pungents (*rasas*); of sowing seeds, qualities of the soil, weights and measures good and bad qualities of commodities and similar characteristics of different countries, profits and losses of articles of trade, and methods for increasing the breed of cattle; wages of labourers, different languages and proper markets for bying and selling.

It is clear that all these various duties owe their origin to those primary functions of the Vaisyas which were generally three in number, *viz.* agricultural, dairy farming and commerce. That it was not possible for a single man to acquire proficiency in all these details of work and perform them all requires no amount of reason to demonstrate. The different sections of the Vaisyas or the masses of the people performed different works, and it was never incumbent upon every single member of the community to take to the pursuit of them all simultaneously. A remarkable story is found in some of the *Puranas* bringing the fact clearly home to us. The story is one among many others about the achievements of the youthful Kṛṣṇa in Vrajabhūmi. The version in the *Viṣṇu-Puranas* is somewhat elaborate and contains such a very fine exposition of the meaning of *Vartta*, its different aspects and their inter-relation, that we think we may find justification for giving it here.

One day arriving in Vraja, Kṛṣṇa found that the cowherds were engaged in the performance of a great sacrifice to Indra. On His enquiring as to why they were sacrificing to Him, he was told by his foster father Nandagopa that it was the Great Indra who sent down the rains that made the earth fertile and led to the growth of vegetation which so benefited men and cattle. At this Kṛṣṇa became angry, and remarked that those people only who gain their living by agricultural pursuits might have occasion to offer sacrifices to Indra; but those who lived by cattle-tending were under no obligation to revere Him. He said "O father! We are neither agriculturists nor traders, but we are denizens of the forests and the cows are our deities. Of the four Vidyas, *Trayi*, *Anviksiki*, *Vartta* and *Dandaniti*, hear from me what *Vartta* is. *Vartta* is divided under three heads according to the differentiation in the means of livelihood such as agriculture, trade and cattle-breeding. Of these agriculture is the calling of husbandmen, trade of the merchants, and to us the cattle are the chief means of livelihood. The Vidya in which one is engaged is his chief deity, and, as such, is to be revered

and worshipped by him, for he is eminently benefited by it. The man who enjoys the fruits of one but worships another does not acquire excellence either in this world or in the next." He further added that it was rather the hills that they ought more properly to worship for they went to the hills to tend their cattle. Hence according to Him they ought rather to exchange their sacrifice to Indra for one to the hills. The same story is to be found in the *Bhagavata-Purana* also. But there the disquisition about the nature of *Vartta* is not so elaborate. However, therein *Vartta* has been termed fourfold in scope by the inclusion of kusida.

The two passages quoted show with sufficient clearness that it was never intended that the different functions denoted by the term *Vartta* should be followed by every individual Vaisya. But different members of the community pursued the one or the other of these different means of livelihood for which *Vartta* was a collective term.

*Vartta* was an important branch of learning in ancient India. In fact, it was looked upon with the same reverence as was commanded by the *Vedas*. This appears from a variety of considerations. When we come to deal with the subject of *Arthashastra* we shall find that it was a very important type of literature in ancient India, dealing especially with the subject of material interests of the community. The literature was variously designated *Arthaveda*, *Arthavidya* or *Arthashastra* and was looked upon as an *Upaveda*, sometimes of the *Rk*, but more generally of the *Atharva Veda*. We shall also see that *Vartta* largely entered within *Arthashastra*, for it was especially a Science of Economics and Politics combined. However, in Kautilya's time *Arthashastra* was not an *Upaveda*, but one of the component elements of *Itihasa Veda*, or the Fifth *Veda* that was looked upon as of the same status as the *Atharva Veda*. The aim of *Arthashastra* was to enable princes to acquire and maintain the earth. And it must be recognised that polity, and economics are both of supreme importance for such an object. The former supplies one of the chief means to carry out that object while the importance of the science of wealth upon the art of government can hardly be overrated. Kautilya described the merits of *Vartta* in these words: "It is most useful in that it brings in grains, cattle, gold, forest produce and free labour. It is by means of the treasury and the army obtained solely through *Vartta* that the king can hold under his control both his and his enemy's party." His work was

primarily a manual meant for princes and therefore looked upon the importance of *Vartta* from its own particular point of view.

As the systematic study of wealth, *Vartta* was looked upon with great importance in ancient India. From the division of the whole field of human knowledge under four primary branches, it appears that these sciences stood on a level of equal importance. That the economic science was looked upon in ancient India with the same reverence as was commanded by the *Vedas* appears from a variety of considerations. This is apparent not only from the four-fold divisions of the sciences, but also from the express mention of the fact. Thus the *Mahabharata* contains several passages about the virtues of *Vartta*. The first passage says that it is only the fools that abandon the three *Vedas*, *Vartta* and their own sons to assume the three-pointed rod and the cloth dyed red (i.e. turn ascetics). The second passage holds that the world has its roots in *Vartta* and is borne by the three *Vedas* and that it is only upon the king's protecting properly that they are all maintained. While the third passage, call the world a place of action where *Vartta* finds favour.

These passages demonstration with sufficient clearness the ideas of the ancient Indians who conceived that men were as much indebted to *Vartta* for their material interests, as they were to the *Vedas* for their spiritual well-being.

Thus we come to see that the economic science was looked upon in ancient India as scarcely less important than the *Vedas*, the Holiest of Holies, the Voice of God Himself.

### Relation between *Vartta* and other Sciences

*Vartta* was pre-eminently the ancient Indian science of wealth. But there was another branch of knowledge in ancient India, variously known as *Arthashastra*, *Arthavidya* or *Arthaveda*, which was looked upon, as has been said already, as an *Upaveda*, sometimes of the *Rgveda*, and, at times again, of the *Atharvaveda*. As is implied by the name, this science also has *artha* for its subject-matter. The province of *Vartta* was *arthanarthau* i.e. profit or loss of wealth. So one may come hastily to conclude that *Vartta* and *Arthashastra* denoted essentially the same science or what is equivalent to the same thing that the two terms are mutually interchangeable? But such a view would be widely divergent from the truth, for the two *Vidyas*, though

possessing some grounds in common between them, are yet characterised by fundamental and far-reaching differences that maintain their separate identity in the field of human knowledge. The relationships between the two *Vidyas* will be clear from the definitions that we have of them. And we shall therefore first of all see how Kautilya, the author of a celebrated treatise upon *Arthashastra*, has defined the two branches of knowledge. We have already dealt with his definition of *Vartta*. This was according to him the *Vidya* that dealt with *arthanarthan* or profit and loss of wealth. This is how he delivers upon its merits.

“*Vartta* is most useful, for it brings in grains, cattle, gold, forest produce (*kupya*) and free-labour (*visti*). It is by means of the treasury (*kosa*) and the army (*danda*) obtained solely through *Vartta* that the king can hold under his control both his and his enemy’s party.”

The nature and scope of *Arthashastra* has been described by Kautilya. “The means of subsistence of mankind is termed *artha*, in other words, the earth containing mankind is *artha*; and the science that treats of the means of acquiring and maintaining the said earth is called *Arthashastra*.” From this it follows clearly that *Arthashastra* really treated of *artha* in the sense of the ‘earth’, and not in its primary sense of ‘wealth’ which was the subject that properly pertained to the field of *Vartta*. *Arthashastra* was thus essentially the science that treated to the means of acquiring and maintaining the earth. The work of Kautilya mentions the same fact in another place, for it actually commences with the statement that it was composed by the author as a compendium of almost all the *Arthashastras* written by prior teachers for the acquisition and maintenance of the earth. From this it follows that *Arthashastra* was really a very comprehensive science as its data were drawn from a wide variety of sources, for any subject that had more or less intimate bearing upon the means of acquiring and maintaining the earth could not but naturally come within its scope. It requires no great logic to demonstrate that *Dandaniti* was the most important branch, in fact the fundamental basis of *Arthashastra*, for the Science of Polity or the art of government ‘upon which the progress of the world depends,’ was of the utmost importance to princes in their efforts to acquire and maintain the earth. But *Vartta* also supplied no mean quota to the science, for it was through *Vartta* and *Vartta* alone that two of the seven limbs of the state, viz. *Kosa*, *Danda* could be

acquired. Thus in a sense *Arthashastra* was nothing but *Dandaniti* drawing largely upon *Vartta* and different other subjects having more or less intimate bearing upon the art of State-craft. The *Sukraniti* recognizes this double aspect of *Arthashastra* when it defines it as the science which describes the actions and administrations of kings, as well as the means of livelihood in a proper manner.

From this follows that *Arthashastra* was essentially a double science comprising both Economics and Politics within its fold. Dr. Law laid stress upon only one aspect of *Arthashastra*, viz., the economic one, when he said that it "deals with wealth, but as good government is the *sine qua non* of peaceful acquisition of wealth, it treats of Polity also," and again that "*Arthashastra* concerns itself with the economic development of the country, but has to do in a large measure with Polity (*Dandaniti*) which helps to create and maintain the condition precedent of economic development." But it deserves to be noted that *Arthashastra* never dealt with 'artha' in the sense of wealth, that was primarily the subject-matter of *Vartta*. *Arthashastra* may be defined as essentially the Science of Polity, that dealt incidentally with certain of the topics of *Vartta* and of other sciences, because of their practical bearing upon the actual work of administration. In fact, this double aspect of *Arthashastra* has often given rise to a confusion of ideas and has led to its being designated sometimes Polity and at times again Economics by writers at different times.

Later on, *Arthashastra* was divested of its economic topics and became simply the political science. In later Sanskrit literature this use is made of the word *Arthashastra*, and terms *Nitishastra*, *Arthashastra*, *Dandaniti* and *Rajaniti* are used indiscriminately to represent the Science of Polity or the Art of Government.

From what has been said hitherto regarding the nature and scope of *Arthashastra*, the relationship in which the two *Vidyas* stood to each other has been made sufficiently clear. *Vartta* was the general science of wealth or the systematic study of the material interest of the community. While *Arthashastra* or the science whose primary aim was to supply such a knowledge to kings as would enable them to acquire and maintain the earth naturally dealt with certain of the topics of *Vartta* alongwith various other subjects, because of their bearing upon the point. In a sense, therefore, *Arthashastra* was more comprehensive or universal in scope than *Vartta*, as its data were drawn from a wide



variety of sources, which though holding their own as separate branches of learning in the field of knowledge entered largely within it; while in its economic aspect it could not but fall under *Vartta* the highest category of learning relating to material interests.

We shall now examine the relationship between *Vartta* and *Arthashastra* somewhat in detail and show how *Arthashastra* largely worked upon the data supplied by the other science. We have given Kautilya's description of the merits of *Vartta*. It will be noted that therein looked he upon *Vartta* from the point of view of the statesman, for *Arthashastra* was essentially a practical manual of State-craft. He has said of *Vartta* that it brings in grains, cattle, gold, forest-produce and free labour and that by it alone are *Kosa* and *Danda* acquired. The question of the exchequer is one of the vital problems of the State. Revenue or incomes are the props of the State. And this question has disturbed politicians of all ages and all climes. The *Arthashastra* fully recognized the value of a well-filled treasury, when it laid down that "all undertakings depend upon finance and hence foremost attention should be paid to the treasury" (II.8). And so it advised the king to carry on mining operations, manufactures, exploit timber and elephant forests, other facilities for cattle breeding and commerce, construct roads for traffic both by land and water, and set up market-towns (II.I). All these go to show the diverse activities of the State in the realm of *Vartta* or in the economic field for the purpose of filling its coffers. Even the most casual reader of Kautilya's work cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the economic legislation recommended in that work is sweepingly vast and wide. The government protruded its interfering hands into almost all spheres of the daily life to the people, social, economic, political and religious to a remarkable extent. The State controlled agricultural lands, forests, mines, undertook the performance of many industrial arts and regulated trade and commerce to a considerable extent. In fact, all these activities were primarily dictated by the policy, as laid down by political thinkers in ancient India, that taxes are to be levied from almost every resource of the people, or to use the sound maxim of the great Kautilya himself, that "just as fruits are gathered from a garden, as often as they become ripe, so revenue shall be collected as often as it becomes ripe." (Bk.V. Ch.II).

Broadly speaking one may lay down that revenue in the *Arthashastra* includes a land and water tax, taxes on the produce of

mines, premiums of coins, various sorts of tolls and duties, fines and benevolences, road cesses, liquor duties and imposts on gambling. Land revenue has been in the past as it still is the mainstay of the royal income in India, and agriculture naturally received a very careful attention from the State. It was the duty of the Superintendent of Agriculture to collect agricultural produce and to cultivate the crown lands in proper seasons. Irrigation work was another important thing that received careful attention from the State. The policy of the government was to make cultivation independent of the rains. There were different superintendents incharge of cows, horses and elephants, and their duties were both of a civil and military character. The first official had also camels, buffaloes, goats, sheeps, asses and mules in his charge. It is interesting to mention in this connection that he who sold his cow from among the herds had to pay to the king one-fourth of its value (II.24). Both forests and mines were State monopolies in Kautilya's system of administration. The duty of the superintendent of forests was very much analogous to modern forest officer. He had to take measures not only for the preservation forests, and collection of forest produce, but had also to start manufacturies to prepare commodities from the latter (II.2.17). It was not only mining, but also commerce in minerals and mineral products that was State-monopoly in Kautilya's system of government. There was a complete centralisation with regard to commodities manufactured from mineral products. It was therefore a very large income that the State made from the mines; both land and ocean.

### REFERENCES

1. For P.C. Sea Gupta's articles see *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (New series), III, pp. 26-29; IV, pp. 393-412. For M.Raja Rao see *Bharatiya Vidya*, X, pp. 104-32.
2. E. Washburn Hopkins. *The Great Epic of India: Its Character and Origin*, New York, 1902. Hopkins criticised and refuted most of the previously held theories.
3. Hopkins, *op.cit.* pp. 397-98. Emphasis added.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 393-94. Hopkins' conclusion is...the Pandu epic in its present form was composed after the Greek invasion.' p. 394.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 396. 'The Pandus be it remembered, ruled all-India, and the limits of this empire, as *geographically defined in the epic*, for surpass the pre-Asokan imagination...', p. 396.

6. Hopkins writes; 'The historical absurdity, upheld by the Rev. Mr. Dahlman in a rapidly appearing series of somewhat tautological volumes, is of much wider application than has perhaps occurred to its author. For in the later editions, which the Rev. Mr. Dahlman regards as primitive parts of the epic, are found most clearly those sections which reflect most clearly the influence of Buddhism. If these sections revert to 500 B.C., all that Buddha as a personality stands for in the history of Hindu religious thought and practice belongs not to him but to his antecedents, and therewith vanishes much of the glory of Buddha.' *Ibid.*, Preface, p. xx'.

Hopkins suggests (p. X) that this was deliberately done by Rev. Mr. Dahlman in order to glorify Christ. That may have been the intention, but Buddha's glory does not suffer a whit because some of his basic teachings are found to have been propounded earlier. Buddha's greatness lies in his transformation of theory into a practical creed which replaced the Vedic religion. Vedic *Karmakanda* lost all practical importance after Buddha, but the *Mbh* shows that in spite of all pious platitudes, people indulged in Vedic sacrifices involving animal slaughter.

7. Kane, *op. cit.* V. p. 516, f.n. no. 743.
8. F. Edgerton, Introduction to the Cr. Ed. of the *Sabha-parvan*, p. XXVIII. In most printed editions the line was given as : *atavim ca purim ramyam yavananam puraim tatha*. This must have been due to the inability of the former editors to understand Antakho or Roma. Indian Pundits do change unknown words. For example Hemachandra's *Abhidhana-cinta mani* states: '*Kumarapalarajasis = Caulukya paramarhata*.' At the beginning of this century, when history of Kumarapala and a biography of Hemachandra were available, a Bengali editor rendered this line as: *Kumarapalas = ca = Aulukya etc.*' In another instance Bharatachandra, the most famous Bengali poet of the 18th century while describing a royal court wrote that the 'king was surrounded by Ujbeg (Uzbeg) and Kajalbash (Kizlbash, 'z' cannot be reproduced in Bengali alphabet). When the text came to be printed in the 19th century, the pundits apparently had forgotten everything about the Uzbegs and Kizlbashes and rendered the words as '*Ujjvala kajivala-vasa*.'
9. Hopkins, *op.cit.* p. 398.
10. Critical Nots on 12.218.30-31. The commentators could not understand the reference and rendered it as 'nastamete'.
11. 'Lauhitya is the name of the ocean (the Manasarovara being, possibly, a partial remnant of the same ocean which was in time dried up and sand silted) from which the Brahmaputra river at present gets its water, the river itself being also otherwise named Lavanda.' S.K. Belvalkar: Introduction to the *Mahaprasthanika-parvan*, p. XXV, f.n. 'Pascoe also

envisages a great W-flowing "Tibetan River" from Pemakoi to Gilgit, the furrow marked by the Tsangpo-Mansarowar Lakes-Sutlej-Gartang-Indus line...certainly seems to have structural continuity....' O.H.K. Spate: *India and Pakistan*, London, 2nd ed., 1957, p. 31.

12. 'Whether the Brahmaputra collided with the Ganges as it does now, or whether it joined the ocean straight south, cannot be ascertained from the text as we have it.' Belvalkar, *op.cit.* f.n.
13. 'There is nothing to show, as one might perhaps imagine, that the party went straight south to Rameshvarma, and then proceeded west-coast line to the Narmada. No reference is made to any of the sites of the important temples of Southern India. The Vindhya mountain in fact had once the honour of being the southernmost terminus of Aryavarta. Compare, in that connection, the story of sage Agastya, narrated in the *Vana-parvan*, 102, 104.' Belvalkar, *op.cit.*
14. Belvalkar, *op.cit.*, pp. XXV-XXVI.
15. Critical Notes, *Mahaprasthanika-parvan*.
16. Hopkins, *op.cit.*, p.88. Hopkins also refused to identify *Samvarta* (14.6.18) as a Jaina monk, which indeed was a preposterous suggestion.
17. *Ibid.*, p.88.
18. Critical Notes on 12.161.44 Dr. Belvalkar has discussed the context at great length. Hopkins has discussed another probable reference to Buddhism in 'Final Notes'; Hopkins, *op.cit.* 475. But the example which he cites is even more unconvincing than those discussed here.
19. After the Bharata war, Arjuna one day requested Kṛṣṇa to recite the *Bhagavad-Gita* again he had forgotten it. Kṛṣṇa was distressed and said:  
*abudhya yan na grhnithas=*  
*tan me sumahad apriyam*  
*nunam asradhadhano' si*  
*durmedhas=ca=pi Pandava* (14.16.10)  
 ('It hurts me deeply that you have failed to retain it. Pandava, you are irreverent and also dull.' Such a stinging rebuke is not to be found elsewhere in the *Mbh*) Kṛṣṇa then expressed his inability to recite the *Gita* again, for, he pointed out, 'When I spoke about *paramabrahma* I was *yoga-yukta*'. (14.16.12) Therefore he recited the *Anugita*. It is quite different from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and of far less importance. It would also not be proper to describe it as a supplement to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, through it seems to clarify a few points raised there.
20. For example Yudhisthira says to Bhishma: 'It is not possible to ascertain the true nature of *dharma* from scriptures alone. For the rich there is one kind of *dharma*, for the poor another. Again, it is said that *dharma* has changed from age to age. *Dharma* is said to be based on the conduct

of good men, but they are not respected by all. Thus, *dharma* eludes all description, and appears illusory like a dream-city.' 12.252.1-13. In reply *Bhisma* quotes a long story (12.253 to 257) but none of Yudhisthira's problems are solved. Many examples of this nature may be given. see. e.g. 13.137 to 142 & 13.144; 12.321.1

21. 12.280.12; 12.283.23; 12.285.35-36; 12.254,45-47; 14.49.2; 14.94.1-35.
22. See the story of the Mongoose, 14.92 to 93.
23. It is not possible to discuss here even briefly the *Samkhya-Yoga* system as propounded in the *Moksadharma-parvan*. In 12.154.2 Yudhisthira refers to 'many systems of philosophy' and in the next verse refers to 'many branches of *dharma*'.
24. This is not surprising if one remembers the historical background. The *Gita* was delivered on the battlefield at the commencement of the war. The *Moksadharma* was related by *Bhisma*, soon after the war ended. He had no knowledge of the *Gita* and drew upon his memory for the stories and doctrines he had heard from the sages.
25. G. Buhlar: Votive Inscriptions from the Stupas at Sanchi, *Epigraphia Indica*, II, pp. 94-5.
26. Sukthankar, *op.cit.*, p. 129.
27. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriented Research Institute*, XXIX, p. 303.
28. V.S. Sukthankar: The Nala Episode and the *Ramayana*, *Festschrift Thomas*, pp. 294-303.
29. V.S. Sukthankar, *Ramopakhyana and Ramayana*, *Festschrift Kane*, pp. 482-87.

# 9

## Economic Organisation

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### Introduction

Among the leaders of the India Nationalist Movement which swept over India during the last quarter of nineteenth century, Justice Ranade—whose centenary the Indian Economic Association is celebrating—takes his place easily in the front rank. For, he embodied in himself that Hindu genius for a cosmic view of life which has been our heritage even from the earliest times. Justice Ranade was not only an eminent jurist but also a brilliant essayist, a great statesman, a genuine national economist and a sincere social reformer. In his life, he showed the vital importance of organised activity which was comprehensive enough to include almost every department of human endeavour. An attempt is made in this paper to show how deep the Ancient Hindus appreciated the necessity for such a comprehensive group-organisations as the Samgha or Samuha achieve success in the ordinary business of life.

There is no doubt that they had attained a high stage of development in the field of organised activity. Even from the early Vedic period, the Hindu genius for co-operative enterprise had exhibited itself as much in matters secular as in matters religious. Apart from such comprehensive group-organisations as the Samgha or Samuha which merely denoted large public associations or “group persons”, there were other special institutions for social, political, and economic purposes. For instance, the Kula was a social group, meaning an assembly of kinsmen, relations or friends. The term Puga was more generic and meant a Samuha of Kulas or families. Then there was the Gana which definitely denoted a political combination, like a republic, in later

literature. Finally, the economic institution called, the Sreni, was an association of persons following a common trade or craft, whether they belonged to the same or different castes. Sreni was therefore a sub-division of Puga; and Puga and other associations were species of Samgha which was any group of persons for common aims and purposes. The Ancient Hindu thus clearly recognised the fact that it was by collective and joint effort that they could acquire and accumulate wealth; and co-operative enterprise, according to Dr. Majumdar, assumed great importance earlier in the economic field than in the political or religious spheres. (Dr. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p.13).

### Historical Summary

The dim beginnings of organised economic activity in India are to be found in the Vedic period (about 800 B.C.). In the Rigveda, for instance, the term Pani occurs several times. It is derived from the root Pan 'to barter' which indicates a relation to a merchant or trader. Now, the Gods are invoked in a certain hymn to fight the Panis; and the fights with the Panis according to Ludwig are "to be explained by their having been original traders who went in caravans—as in Arabia and North Africa—prepared to fight, if need be, to protect their goods against attacks which the Aryans would naturally deem quite justified." (Ludwig, *The Rig Veda*, Vol. I., p. 471). Thus, there must have been a corporation of traders, strong enough to fight their opponents and defy them. Again, the use of the words Sreshti and Gana in Vedic literature points to the existence of guilds even in those early times.

These nebulous guild organisations of the Vedic period took a definite shape in the Jataka period (about seventh century B.C.). Men with similar occupations formed themselves into separate organisations or guilds with definite rules to guide them. Nearly all the branches of industry and trade appear to have had their own guilds. Dr. Majumdar gives a comprehensive list of such guilds which includes a wide range of workers in different departments of economic activity. For instance there were guilds amongst artisans such as workers in metal, workers in stone, leather workers, ivory workers, weavers, potters and jewellers, dyers, painters and braziers, fishermen, herdsman and cultivators, butchers and barbers, merchants and moneylenders. Even robbers had formed themselves into group associations, as a counterpart of which,

there were guilds of forest police to put down the depredations of the former. In this period again, a clear difference in organisation arose between traders and merchants on the one side and the artisans on the other. As regards the former, though hereditary families pursuing certain branches of trade formed themselves into a corporation with a *Jetthaka* (alderman) at its head, yet there is no evidence in the *Jatakas* to show that there was a highly developed organisation among them. But in the case of the artisans, the position was very different. Here the hereditary feature of the occupation was more marked than in the case of traders and merchants; the son had to be apprenticed to the craft of his father from his early youth and the manual skill and talent for a particular industry became an inheritance from generation to generation. The *Jatakas* abound in references to the son of an artisan following the same occupation as that of his father.

In the next period, that of the early *Dharmasutras* (5th century B.C. to 3rd century B.C.) the guilds enter on a further stage of their development. The corporations of artisans and traders are now recognised by the constitution as an important factor in the state and invested with the highly important power of making laws for themselves. They also exercised executive and judicial authority and were placed by the *Dharmasutras* practically on the same footing as that of the king and other political institutions.

The guilds of Ancient India gained further status and influence in the period of the early *Dharmasastras* (2nd century B.C. to 4th century A.D.) when the *Sreni Dharma* or 'usages of the guilds' were recognised as having the force of law. Numerous instructions are found in the *Smritis* laying down punishments—such as banishment from the realm and confiscation of property—to be meted out to those members who broke the rules of the guilds. Thus in this period not only was the guild recognised as a definite part of the state fabric but its authority was upheld by the state and its prestige and status considerably enhanced by the definite announcement of the state policy to guarantee its successful existence by affording it all timely help and assistance.

The progress of the guilds is maintained in the next period represented by the later *Dharmasastras*, like those of *Narada* and *Brihaspati* (5th to the 7th Century A.D.). In both, separate chapters are devoted to the title of law arising out of the transgression of compact (*Samvid-Vyatikrama*). *Narada* explicitly states that "the king must



maintain the usages of the guilds and corporations. Whatever be their laws, their (religious) duties, (the rules) regarding their attendance, and the (particular mode of) livelihood prescribed for them" (Narada x. 2,3). These injunctions of the Dharmasastras show the high importance attached to the guild organisations as a powerful factor in society.

That the guild organisation continued to be in full vigour even to the last years of the Hindu period is evidenced by a number of records. An inscription at the Vaillabhata Svamin Temple at Gwalior refers to the organisation of Sreshtis and Sarthavahas, etc., ruling the city of Gwalior in the year 877 A.D. This shows that the political importance of the old guild organisations remained undiminished to the very last in Ancient India. Further, there are numerous references in the South Indian inscriptions to the existence of guilds among traders and artisans down to a very late period. Thus we learn from a Kanarese inscription dated 1178 A.D. that the five hundred swamis of Ayyavole, the Nanadesis, the Setthis, etc., having assembled, granted a tax for the worship of the God Ahava-Mallesvara (Government Epigraphists' report 1919 p. 18, No. 216).

### **Genesis of the Guild Organisation**

Among the several types of social organisation in Ancient India, such as Kula, Puga, Gana and Sreni, the last one alone denoted particularly in economic corporation of tradesmen or artisans. Sreni is defined as a corporation of people belonging to the same or different caste, but following the same trade or industry. In short it was a guild of artisans, craftsmen or traders.

According to Brihaspati "a compact formed among cultivators, artisans and others is called an agreement; such an agreement must be observed both for the prevention of danger (from enemies) and a proper discharge of duties (by the members). When a danger is apprehended from robbers and thieves, it is considered as a distress common to all; in such a case, the danger must be repelled by all, not by one man alone whoever he may be" (Brih. xvii 5-6). Thus it was fully realised that it was by co-operation and not by single effort that common dangers could be faced successfully and common purposes achieved satisfactorily. It was these 'two factors that originally led to the rise and growth of economic organisations, like the Srenis, in Ancient India.

But as Dr. Fick has pointed out there were two other forces operating at the same time, which particularly favoured the development of guilds. The one was the hereditary character of the professions and the other, the localisation of industries. Thus we read of a potter's son becoming a potter, a smith's son becoming a smith and so on. Combinations became specially easy when a profession became thus settled into a close corporation. Men following the same art or craft came to understand each other from their very infancy; and this early knowledge of one another enabled them to organise themselves for common purposes with little difficulty.

This tendency to combination was strengthened by the other factor, viz., localisation of industry. Streets and particular quarters in a town and whole villages were inhabited by one and the same class of artisans. Thus in the Arthasastra of Kautilya, we read of "those who work by fire (*i.e.*, blacksmiths) shall all live together in a single locality" (Arth. II. 36). Again in another chapter, we are specially told of the construction of quarters for artisans following particular profession in the same locality. "To the west, artisans manufacturing worsted threads, bamboo mats, skins, armours, weapons and gloves...shall have their dwellings. To the north, ironsmiths and artisans working in precious stones...shall reside.... Families of work-men may in any other way be provided with sites befitting their occupation and field work" (Arth. II,4). In the Jatakas, we read of villages such as the Mahavaddakigamo, consisting of a thousand families of dealers in wood (Jat. II p.18) and the Kammaragamo, containing the same number of smith's dwellings (Jat. III, p.281).

### Organisation and Constitution of the Guilds

The first step in the formation of a new guild was to inspire mutual confidence among those who wanted to become members. And for this purpose, Brihaspati laid down certain formalities which had to be observed by them. The first formality was known as Kosha or "the ordeal by sacred libation." According to this the intending member had to drink three mouthfuls of water, in which (an image of) the deity whom he holds sacred has been bathed and worshipped. If he should meet himself with any calamity within a week or a fortnight, (after having undergone this ordeal) it shall be regarded as a proof of his guilt (*i.e.*, unfitness for membership). Otherwise he would be considered to be pure and so worthy of becoming a member of the guild" (Sacred

Books of the East. Vol. XXXIII, p. 116). The second formality was Lekhakriya, which probably meant the drawing up of a convention or an agreement laying down rules and regulations for common guidance. The third one was known as Madhyastha, which might have reference to the well-known practice of securing guarantees for the faithful conduct of the members.

These conditions being fulfilled, the members set forth to frame a constitution for the conduct of their daily work. At the head of the executive machinery was a chief or president, assisted by two, three or five executive officers. According to Brihaspati, only honest persons, who are acquainted with the Vedas and their duty, who are able, self-controlled, sprung from noble families and skilled in every business, were to be appointed as executive officers. The president himself was to be an honest and efficient man (Brih. XVII. 9).

Considerable authority was exercised by these officers. Thus, according to Brihaspati, "a member who failed wilfully to observe, his part of the agreement was liable to confiscation his whole property and also to banishment from the town. The negligent as well as quarrelsome members were fined six nishkas or four suvarnas each." Further "a member who injures the joint-stock...who causes dissensions or does violent acts or who is inimically disposed towards the company, association or king shall be censured and reprimanded and then forsaken by the heads of the families and associations and also banished from the town" (Brihaspati XVII.13-17).

As long as the executive officers in the exercise of their authority acted strictly in accordance with the rules prescribed by the constitution all their actions whether harsh or kind towards other people, had the approval of the king, for "they are declared to be the appointed managers (of their affairs)" (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 33, p.349). But if it could be proved that the executive officers were actuated by hatred in injuring a single member of the fellowship, the king could restrain them; and if they persisted in their conduct, he could punish them (Brih. XVII.19). And if the whole association were guilty of an attempt to cheat the king of the share due to him, they could be compelled to pay eight times as much and punished if they took to flight (Brihaspati XVII. 21). Thus while honesty and efficiency were duly secured, an attempt was made at the same time to safeguard the freedom and security of individual members.

However, in spite of the exercise of high authority by the executive officers, the guilds were essentially democratic in their organisation. There was a house of assembly (Brih. XVII. 2) in which all the members of the guild met and discussed their affairs in common. Narada refers to regular rules being laid down for the attendance of members : and the king had to approve of them, whatever, they might be (Narada X.3). Again in a passage quoted by Katyayana in his *Vivadaratnakara*, it is indicated that an executive officer who injures a person for having spoken something reasonable, or interrupts a speaker, or speaks something improper, is liable to punishment with *Purva-sahasadanda* (*Bibliothica Indica*, p.179). Thus, not only was the right of the assembly to punish its chiefs for improper conduct firmly established, but the idea of freedom of speech of the members was also clearly recognised. It was only when a conflict occurred that the king was requested to decide the case.

The rules of distribution of the profits of the guilds also bear out the democratic if not the socialistic nature of the guilds. Thus it is laid down by Brihaspati: "Whatever is obtained by a man, shall belong to all in common; whether it has been obtained a six month or a month ago, it shall be divided in due proportion or it shall be bestowed on the idiotic, the aged, the blind, to women or children, to afflicted or diseased persons, to persons having issue or the like (worthy persons); whatever is obtained or preserved by the members of a fellowship, or spent on behalf of the society or acquired through the king's favour, is common to all (members of the society)" (Brihaspati XVII.22-24). Further, according to Mitramisra, the inclusion of new members into a guild or the exclusion of old members from it depended entirely on the general assembly of the guild. But once a person was admitted into the guild, the new members would at once share equally with others, the existing assets and liabilities of the guild and enjoy the fruits of its religious and charitable acts, while at the same time, the man excluded from the guild would at once cease to have any interest in them.

Apart from these minor features the most outstanding democratic element in the guild organisation was the ultimate responsibility of the executive officers to the general assembly of members. Mitramisra dwells on this aspect of guild organisation in detail. Indicating that verse 187 of the second chapter of *Yajnavalkya* refers to *Mukhyas*, he

recites a text from Katyayana to illustrate the doctrine of "the right of the assembly to punish its chiefs." According to him, any of the executive officers, who was guilty of any heinous crime, who created dissensions or who destroyed the property of the association could be removed and the removal was only to be notified to, but not necessarily sanctioned by, the king (Viramitrodaya, p.428). However, as indicated by Brihaspati when a powerful executive officer assumed a defiant attitude the matter was to be brought to the notice of the king, who "will decide it and bring him back to his duty" (Brihaspati XVII, 20).

### **Functions of the Guilds**

The Ancient Indian guilds were not merely confined to the development of the arts and crafts. They performed many other functions besides their own professional ones. They acted as courts of law, functioned as religious and social service clubs and very often served as local banks. They also cultivated the fine arts and became centres of culture and progress. And as Dr. Majumdar has pointed out, they even adopted the military profession and afforded security and protection to life and property in those troublous days. Thus the guilds of Ancient India were not merely an ornament but a truly powerful element in the social organisation of those times.

Soon after being organised in the form of an association the members of the guild were to draw up a document, which would embody all the main items of work to be undertaken by them. According to Brihaspati, the chief functions of the guilds were laid down thus: "The construction of a house of assembly, of a shed for (accommodating travellers with) water, a temple, a pool, a garden, relief to the helpless or poor people, a common path or defence shall be undertaken by us in proportionate shares" (Brih.XVII, 2). Thus the activity of the guilds was extended to a variety of objects of public utility. They also helped the poor to perform the "Samskaras" or sacrificial acts enjoined by the sacred texts. This aspect of guild activity is borne out by the evidence of the inscriptions. Thus the Junar inscription mentions the excavation of a cave and the construction of a instern by a guild of corndealers. (Epigraphia Indica X Appendix). The Mandasor inscription refers to a guild of silk-weavers which built a magnificent temple of the Sun in 437 A.D. and repaired it again in 473-4 A.D. (Fleet : Gupta Inscriptions No.18).

As has already been noticed, the guilds exercised considerable executive and judicial authority over its members in matters affecting their own business. But according to Brihaspati they acted as ordinary courts of law as well. "Relatives, guilds, assemblies (of co-inhabitants and other persons duly authorised by the king, should decide law-suits among them, excepting causes concerning violent crimes (Sahasa); when a cause has not been (duly) investigated by (meetings of) kindred, it should be decided after due deliberation by guilds; when it has not been (duly) examined by guilds, it should be decided by assemblies of (co-inhabitants); and when it has not been (sufficiently) made out by such assemblies (it shall be tried) by appointed (judges)" Brih. 1,28,30). Again, according to Narada, "Gatherings (Kula) corporations (Sreni) assemblies (Gana), appointed by the king, and the king himself are invested with the power to decide law-suits" (Narada 1,7). The guild thus had a definite place in the gradation of the courts of the land and formed the second of the ordinary courts of justice, from each of which an appeal lay successively to the next higher ones.

One of the main functions of the guilds was the relief of the poor, the construction of public buildings and the maintenance of temples. For instance, an assembly of merchants from eighteen subdivisions of seventy-nine districts decided to set a part of the income derived from merchandise for the repair of temples;  $\frac{1}{4}$  panam on each bundle of female cloth, each podi of pepper, etc. (Government Epigraphists' Report, 1915, p.104). One guild undertakes to feed Brahmins and another to maintain a free offering out of the interest of the money deposited with them (Epigraphia Indica Vol. XII, p. 273).

Here we touch upon a very interesting aspect of the guilds' activity. The guilds very often used to undertake the functions of modern banks. There are a number of inscriptions of the period of the early Dharmasastras (2nd Century B.C. to 4th Century A.D.) which record the investments of money with the guilds by rich people for special purposes. For instance an inscription of the year 120 A.D. at Nasik records that Ushavadata, son-in-law of the Sake Chief Nahapana, invested a sum of three thousand karshapanas in two guilds for the benefit of Buddhist monks, two thousand in a Weavers' guild, the rate of interest being one per cent per month, one thousand in another weavers' guild at the rate of three-fourth per cent per month. The interest was to be devoted for the purpose of supplying certain needs of the Buddhist monks (Epigraphia Indica Vol. VIII pp.82-86). Again

we read of another investment of a thousand karshapanas in a guild of potters an investment of two thousand in the karshapanas in the guild of Odayantrikas probably workers manipulating hydraulic engines, water clocks, etc.), and an investment of five hundred karshapanas with a guild of oil-millers for the purpose of helping Buddhist monks (Rapson : Andra Coins C XXXIV). Besides, another guild receives an investment of the income of two fields for planting Karanja and banyan trees. (Ep. Ind. App. p.132). Most of these endowments were perpetual which go to prove the efficiency of these organisations and the faith and confidence which the public had in them.

According to Dr. Majumdar, the guilds of Ancient India were also great military powers. Thus in Book IX, Chapter 2, Kautilya includes "Srenivala" among the various classes of troops which the king might possess. It was sometimes used both for defensive and for offensive purposes; and when the enemy's army consisted mostly of this class of soldiers, the king had also to enlist them in his service. Again in Book V, Chapter 3, dealing with "Subsistence to Government Servants," the pay of "Srenimukhyas" (chiefs of guilds) is set down as equal to that of the chiefs of elephants, horses and chariots, followed with the remark that "the amount would suffice for having a good following in their own communities." Finally in Book VII, Chapter I, the Sreni is classed alongwith soldiers as a means to repel the invasion of the enemy. Kautilya also refers to a class of Kshatriya guilds which lived upon both trade and war. The guilds continued the adoption of the military profession even in later periods. For instance, from the Mandasor Inscription, we learn that some members of the silk-weavers' guilds took to the army and these martial spirits valorous in battle "even today ...effect by force the destruction of their enemies" (Fleet : Gupta Inscription No.18). The Kshatriya Srenis of Kautilya seem to have subsisted for a long time at least in Southern India, as is evidenced by the existence of Velaikkaras of the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. This community consisted of various working classes and is frequently referred to in the Tanjore inscriptions of the Chola Kings as a part of the different regiments of their army. They later emigrated to Ceylon and were employed as mercenaries by the kings of that country (Government Epigraphists' Report 1918, p.101).

The guilds were highly mobile bodies, capable of moving from place to place in response to the necessities of the situation. A very remarkable instance of such mobility is that furnished by the Mandasor

Stone Inscription (Fleet : Gupta Inscriptions No.18). It relates how a guild of silk-weavers migrated from Lata to Dasapur, attracted by the virtues of the king of that place. Here many of them took to different pursuits. Some learnt archery and became good fighters, others adopted a religious life and discoursed on religious topics. Some devoted themselves to a study of astronomy and astrology, while others gave up all worldly pursuits and became ascetics. A good many of them, however, continued their old profession of silk-weaving. The guild prospered so well at Dasapura that it could build a magnificent temple of the Sun there in 436 A.D. out of its accumulated profits.

It is thus evident that the guilds of ancient India were not merely close corporations of craftsmen, devoted entirely to the pursuit of their own occupation and little susceptible to culture or progress. On the other hand, they were highly versatile organisations, keenly alive to cultural interests other than those of their own profession. As Dr. Fleet has pointed out, "the guild in Ancient India was thus not merely the means for the development of arts and crafts; but through the autonomy and freedom accorded to it by the law of the land, it became a centre of strength and an abode of liberal culture and progress, which truly made it a power and ornament of society" (Fleet : Gupta Inscriptions No.18).

The fundamental feature of all guild activity was the collective responsibility that it implied. The guilds were corporate bodies to discharge their functions collectively. For instance, a guild of shepherds had pledged themselves to supply ghee for keeping a temple lamp burning perpetually in these words : "We, all the following shepherds of this village, have received seventy ewes of this temple in order to supply ghee for burning one perpetual lamp. We shall cause one shepherd amongst us to supply an alakku of ghee for one perpetual lamp...If he dies, absconds or gets into prison, fetters or chains, we, all the aforesaid persons, are bound to supply ghee for keeping the holy lamp burning as long as the sun and the moon endure." (Hultsch : South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. II p. 251).

### **Guild Finance**

The affective discharge of so many functions necessarily meant considerable outlay and a large revenue. The guilds undoubtedly derived their income from varied sources. According to Brihaspati and



Yajñavalkya, the main sources were the contributions of individual members, the gifts of the king, the profits earned by the members on corporate undertakings and the fines, forfeitures and confiscations for offences (Brih. XVII, 24 and Yajñavalkya II, 190). Another important source of revenue for the guilds was the octroi and other duties which they could levy on goods bought and sold within the municipal limits. These items were often supplemented by private borrowing by the guilds or by State help to them.

According to South Indian Inscriptions the main source of the guilds' income was land revenue, the assessment of which would vary with the nature of the land and its possibilities and the kind of crops raised on it. The guilds also depended on taxes on professions and workshops. The shopkeepers, the barbers and Washermen had to pay a license fee. The weavers, the oil-mongers, the blacksmiths, the goldsmiths, the carpenters, the potters and braziers were all taxed. To these were added in some cases a stamp duty, a tax on vehicles and contributions for Kartika festivals (Hultzsch : South Indian Inscriptions No. 74 of 1887 and No. 54 of 1914).

All this income was of course required for the due discharge of the multifarious functions of the guilds. Some part of the funds was utilised for the relief of deserving persons such as the distressed, the diseased, the blind, the idiotic, the infirm, the orphans and helpless women. The remaining money was spent on public works, such as the construction of a house of assembly, a shed for (accommodating travellers with) water, a temple, a pool and a garden (Brih. XVII. II, 12).

One significant feature of guild finance was that all its gains were to be equally divided among its members. For instance according to Brihaspati "whatever is obtained by a man shall belong to all in common; whether it has been obtained six months or a month ago, it shall be divided in due proportion. Whatever is obtained or preserved by the members of the fellowship or spent on behalf of the society, or acquired through the king's favour, is common to all (members of the society) Brihaspati, XVII. 22, 24). Thus the guild expenditure was socialistic to a degree.

### **The Guild and the State**

The guild formed a very vital element in the State organisation.

In many respects it almost functioned as the State; it was indeed an *Imperium in Imperio*. That the guild had considerable power and influence is borne out by ample evidence. It was a body feared and respected by the people and even the king showed deference to it. For instance, in the Mahabharata, we are told that king Duryodhana did not like to return to his capital after his defeat by the Gandharvas. "What will the heads of the guilds and others say to me and what shall I tell them in reply" (Mahabharata : Vana Parva, 248).

The guilds exercised a great influence in the State, as they contributed a large amount of revenue by way of taxes and otherwise. According to Arthashastra, the taxes collected from the corporations of artisans and handicraftsmen (Karasilpiganah) was classed under revenue derived from forts or cities (Arth. Bk. II, Ch.6). In times of emergency, the guilds were obliged to pay to the state in a number of ways. Among the methods for the replenishment of the treasury by a king who finds himself in great financial trouble and needs money, Kautilya mentioned the following : "or else, a spy, in the garb of a rich merchant, or a real rich merchant famous for his vast commerce, may borrow or take on pledge vast quantities of gold, silver and other commodities or borrow from corporations bar gold or coined gold for various kinds of merchandise to be procured from abroad. After having done this he may allow himself to be robbed of it the same night" (Arth. Bk. V. Ch.2).

Occasionally, the guilds were so powerful as to become a menace even to the authority of the state itself. For instance, autocratic or unpopular or weak administrators would sometimes find the guilds centres of rebellion. It was therefore thought advisable to take special measures to divide and weaken them or to enlist their support actively on the side of the government. In Book V Chapter 3 of the Arthashastra, dealing with "subsistence to Government Servants" the pay of "Srenimukhyas" (chiefs of guilds) is set down as equal to that of the chiefs of elephants, horses and chariots; and with this amount they can have a good following in their own communities." Further in Book VII, Chapter 6, Kautilya mentions, among the nefarious ways by which a hostile party is kept down, that a "Srenivala" (according to Majumdar, guilds which followed a military profession alongwith industrial arts) is to be furnished with a piece of land that is constantly disturbed by an enemy evidently with a view to keep them too busy to interference in the affairs of State. In Book VII Chapter I, the "Sreni"

is classed alongwith soldiers as a means to repel the invasion of the enemy.

The importance attached to guild agreements is best evidenced by the fact that according to Yajnavalkya and Manu, Narada and Brihaspati, the violation of agreements entered into with the corporations is recognised as one of the recognised titles of law. (Manu VIII, 51, Narada X,2, Brihaspati X, 6 and Yajnavalkya II, 15). Further Yajnavalkya lays down that the duties arising from the rules and regulations of the corporation (Samayika), not inconsistent with the injunctions of the sacred texts as well as the regulations laid down by the king, must be observed with care, thus placing the duty towards the guilds on an equal footing with that towards the state.

Again, in the Mahabharata, we are told that guilds should not be taved heavily, as their disaffection would be a great calamity to the State (Shanti Parva, 13). In fact, one of the many supports upon which ultimately rest the power of the state is the power of the guilds. Hence the State must either bribe them into submission or divide and rule them or keep them busy in one way or another (Shanti Parva, 107). Their heads must be brought over when the king undertakes the invasion of another kingdom (Shanti Parva, 59, 141).

The guild was, therefore, a formidable factor in the body politic. It enjoyed all the privileges of a corporate personality. "If a man belonging to a corporation in a village or a district, after swearing to an agreement, breaks it through avarice, the king shall banish him from his realm" (Manu VIII, 219 and Yajnavalkya II, 187-192). Thus all the agreements entered into with a guild had the sanction of the state behind them.

Again, the Jetthaka (alderman) and Setthi, *i.e.*, "the heads of corporations were treated by the kings as representatives of the people. In the Pre-Maurya period, it was through their guilds that the people were summoned by the king on important occasions (Rhys Davids : Buddhist India, p. 97). Srenis also played an important part in public finance, as the taxes to be paid by traders and other inhabitants of the town were agreed upon by the rulers "in consultation with the heads of the guilds." (Hopkins : India, p.176).

Necessarily, therefore, the Mukhyas, *i.e.*, heads, presidents or representatives of the corporations constituted like the king's

councillors, an important 'estate' of the realm. At the coronation of the kings, *e.g.*, in the Ramayana, guilds had the right to the sprinkling or anointing ritual. Sometimes guild members occupied high state offices as we know from the Jatakas. Socially on the whole they were almost the 'peers' of the king and undoubtedly their influence on public opinion was very great.

Though the guilds were powerful bodies exercising great influence over the body politic, yet limitations were set to their power. If they transgressed these limits, they were to be checked by the king. Thus, according to Narada, "among heretics, followers of the Veda, guilds of merchants, corporations, troops of soldiers, assemblages or kinsmen and other associations, the king must maintain the usages settled among them, both in fortified towns and in the country. Whatever be their laws, their religious duties, the rules regarding their attendance and the particular mode of livelihood prescribed for them, that the king shall approve of. But the king had to prevent them from undertaking acts as would be either apposed to the wishes of the king or contemptible or immoral in their nature or injurious to his interests. The king could forbid a combination of different associations (possibly of a hostile nature) arming of those bodies without due reason, and conflict between them. Further, those who cause dissensions among the members of an association shall undergo punishment of a particularly severe kind, because they would be dangerous to society if they were allowed to go free. Whenever a criminal act, opposed to the dictates of morality has been attempted, the king desirous of prosperity shall redress it" (Narada X, 4, 5, 7). The commentary on these verses is more enlightening as regards the relations of the king with such guilds. It says that the king had to maintain the rules and usages at settled by the guilds, whatever, they might be. But the guilds may lay down such rules as "we shall not pay taxes to the king", "we shall gamble," "we shall drive it excessive speed along the public road" etc. In all such cases, the king had to put down the activities of the guilds, as they were injurious to the political and social interests of the state. Otherwise, the guilds were free to act in their own way and the king was obliged to accept their decision (Narada—Samhita, edited by Jolly, p. 164, footnote).

Again, the heads of the guilds were often the great favourites of kings. In the Urage Jataka, we find two guild leaders as being included

among the Kosala Mahamata. They were the exponents of class interests and often represented the guilds in the executive administration. In one of the Jatakas, we find one of these headmen appointed as a Lord of the treasury (No. 445). According to Prof. Rhys Davids, disputes between one guild and another came under the jurisdiction of the Mahasetti or the Lord High Treasurer, who acted as a sort of Alderman over the guilds (Buddhist India, p.97).

Oftentimes, the guilds used to collect taxes from the people on behalf of the state. For instance, a guild of braziers was authorised to receive taxes from all classes of people in the month of Kartika (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XIV, p.158). The guild thus served as a treasury of the state.

But the guilds used to frequently stand up against the oppression of tyrannical governments. One guild for instance decreed that none of its members should give to the king's officers and other oppressors any shelter, or write accounts for them, or agree to their proposals as a defensive measure against the cruel exactions of the king. They had pledged themselves to mutual support in these words : "We the members of ninety-eight sub-sects enter into a compact in the nineteenth year of the king, that we shall hereafter behave like the sons of the same parents, and what good or evil may befall any one of us, will be shared by all? If anything happens to the Idangai class, we will jointly assert our rights till we establish them." (Government Epigraphists' Report 1913, p.73).

## Conclusion

Thus, the Srenis of Ancient India, though primarily economic in their scope, were very powerful institutions exercising political and social functions and enjoying a considerable amount of executive, legislative and judicial autonomy. No doubt, they must have been very often restricted and circumscribed by the centralising efforts of successful empire-builders or nation-makers. It is, however clear, Dr. Sarkar has pointed out, that "On the whole, the Swaraj of Hindu Srenis, the functional sovereignty of India's old economic associations, was essentially an analogue, if not a replica of the *Liber Burgus* of Medieval Europe, insofar as this latter was achieved by and dependent on guilds and crafts" (B.N. Sarkar : The Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus, p.49).

The guilds no doubt did serve a useful purpose in their own times. They were politically powerful, socially serviceable and economically efficient. They were essentially suited to the handicraft stage of industrial development, when perfection depended largely on the hereditary skill of the small craftsman. But the overwhelming competition of cheap machine-made goods—which were imported into India after the Industrial Revolution in the West—brought wholesale ruin on the hereditary craftsman, who had to give up his occupation and take to agriculture or even domestic service. The suddenness with which he was attacked hardly gave him any time to adjust himself to the new situation so that he gave up the unequal struggle with very little resistance.

The ancient Indian guilds have been criticised for the very strict enforcement of their regulations; but the chief object of these rules was not only to preserve the solidarity of their organisation but also to give the weak and unfortunate the same chance in life as others more favoured by circumstances. It is also true that these guilds were based on a theocratic conception of life. "But the development of the competitive impulse, particularly in the pursuit of personal gain in the modern age, is absolutely opposed to the growth of the sentiment of humanity and of religious conviction among men." (Birdwood : *The Industrial Arts of India*, Part II, p.139).

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(B. Tirumalachar)

### MESSAGE OF THE EAST

And what, meanwhile, of India herself? Is it well with the bearer of the message? By no means, indeed. A century of 'progress' has brought India to the stage where almost everything of beauty and romance belongs to her past. This past survives in, and still dominates the present, so that the change is not apparent to a very superficial observer. But it is certain that nothing of beauty or romance is the direct product of the present, nor is there any immediate prospect of changes in life, education and ideals to make it otherwise.

The true message of the West has been misunderstood. That message is, that a comprehension and subordination of the concrete are necessary for the ultimate security of the ideal life. But to all the finer forces in Western civilisation, tending to the ultimate evolution of an ideal life, India has remained largely blind. She has treated the concrete and material achievement as an end in itself, and endeavoured

rather to imitate results than to assimilate methods. Indians would learn just so much science as should enable them to compete in commerce with the West; just so much 'art' as to supply the material for popular oleographs and picture postcards, and the requirements of the quint trade; just so much music as to play on the harmonium or listen to a gramophone; just so much architecture as to build a suburban villa (with the aid of imported cast iron beams). It has become a question rather of what to get than what to give? Not unnaturally, we get but the husks of western culture. We have not added the best of the West to the best of the East. Perhaps such an addition would be impossible, insofar as virtues may be mutually exclusive. Much rather, however, we have loosed our hold on the best of the East and grasped little more than the worst of the West. And what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Apparently without a pang, the present generation witnesses the disappearance of all that went to make the dignity, the grace, and the mystery of Indian life. Above all, there has been the loss of rhythm and discipline which is inevitably reflected in art.

Art is the expression of controlled emotion. Naturally if emotion is uncontrolled or false, art also will be undisciplined and insincere.

The most disconcerting symptom of the present time is the apparent unconsciousness of evil. Modern Indians are quite satisfied with an outward life that is unlovely, unrhythmic and undisciplined. They are not even aware that there is anything greatly amiss, hardly prepared to admit, perhaps, that there is serious harm in replacing the luxurious simplicity of Indian culture by an indiscriminating caricature of European life—gramophones and tenth-rate bands, bastard architecture and in artistic manufactures.

It is a fatal error; for, as Plato so clearly saw, there is in all these things *propriety* and *unpropriety*, and the "ill, undisciplined, illiberal, indecent" manner words exactly applicable to modern Indian fine and decorative 'art') must be restrained—"lest our guardians," *being educated in the midst of ill representations*, as in an ill pasture, where

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\* The 'guardians' of Plato's ideal community represented an aristocracy of intellect and discipline corresponding to the Brahmans and Kshatriyas of Indian culture, and the 'Samurai' of Mr. Well's 'Utopia.'



by everyday plucking and eating a deal of different things, by *little and little they contract imperceptibly some mighty evil in their soul.*"

How different is the course of modern art development in India and in Europe! We have seen that realism in Europe, in part at least, represents a necessary transition stage in a reaction from artificiality to truth. India has not striven for realism under the same internal and living stimulus, but from a desire to imitate the brilliant and captivating results of this concrete achievement. At the same time, the Indian school of art student misses its essential virtue, the patient and faithful training, the long years of devoted study, which even the most realistic and materialistic western art demands. The essence of vulgarity, says Ruskin, consists in imitating the manners of others without comprehending the effect really produced. This is the explanation of the vulgarity of modern Indian 'art'. Of all-Indian art dominated by European influence, there is practically none that can hold its own with its prototype.

At the same time accepting theoretically this modern and quite false standard of criticism—the standard of mere anatomical correctness, which would accept the work of any academy student and reject the early Italian painting and the Gothic woodcut—accepting this, the educated Indian mind today has grown blind to the serenity, the rhythm and tenderness, the vitality and above all the truths of Indian painting and sculpture.

There is no more searching test of the vitality of a people than the revelation in art—plastic, literary, musical—of their inward being. A national art is a self-revelation where no concealment is possible. If then this art be mean, illiberal, undisciplined, and in the truest sense indecent, that is unfitting, inharmonious, it does assuredly indicate some mighty evil in the body politic. That evil is, that Indians are destroying their civilisation as a compliment to England. By this vulgarisation of art, music, drama and life, a more serious injury is done to the national life, than any external political or economic force can effect. The secret of our weakness is, that we do not love India—we love only a reflection of suburban England which we hope to establish here. Let us, however for once face this fact, that an India thus politically free, but subdued by Europe in her inmost soul, is not worth striving for.

Therefore I say, awake while there is time. Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the selt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? And even if you persist in believing that everything European is fair and everything Indian barbarous, yet remember that the highest ideal of nationality is service. You will be judged, not by what you successfully assimilate, but by what you contribute to the culture and civilisation of humanity. Not merely is it impossible for you to reproduce (you can only caricature) the outward forms of western civilisation, but it is a mistaken aim. In the lofty words of Sri Krishna—"Better is one's own duty, though insignificant, than the duty of another, even though performed with brilliance."

The west will not fail to unearth and sooner or later assimilate the message of the east. But how different the power of that message delivered by the teachers of a living people whose own inspiration it still is; and its power if merely found to be implicit in their ancient culture, and not realised in their actual lives. How great is the responsibility of those who are the hereditary guardians of this message. Theirs is the choice between intellectual and spiritual slavery, and intellectual and spiritual service. One choice is death, the other life.

(Ananda K. Comaraswamy)

### THE ELLORA CAVES

From the Bagh Caves where we were last, we return by road either to Indore or to Mhow, from where we take train towards Bombay *via* Khandwa and Bhusaval. From Jalgaon, the next station after Bhusaval, where motor conveyance is available, it is possible to go to Ajanta and thence to Ellora by road. But instead of taking this route, we shall continue by rail to Manmad Junction, change train and come to Aurangabad, a large town with an excellent State Hotel. There are some Buddhist Cave Temples near Aurangabad, as also the tomb of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (d. 1707) and the Mausoleum he built in honour of his wife, meant by him to rival the famous Taj of Agra, but which is in fact a cheap and inferior imitation of the latter (see picture facing p. 144). Motor buses and taxis are available for Ellora from Aurangabad.

About 16 miles north-west of Aurangabad are situated the famous rock-hewn cave temples of Ellora, the largest of the kind in India and

one of the wonders of the world on account of their extent, huge dimensions and elaborate carvings. The caves, numbering altogether 34, are excavated on the face of a crescent-shaped hill running north-south for a distance of about 1½ miles. The southern horn of the crescent consists of 12 Buddhist Caves, the centre consists of 17 Brahmanical Caves and the northern horn consists of 5 Jaina Caves. We shall reserve for a future occasion a detailed description of the Brahmanical (8th-9th centuries) and the Jaina (10th-13th centuries) Caves. Ellora was thus typical of the Indian religious spirit of mutual tolerance and harmony among various sects.

### Buddhist Caves

The Buddhist Caves were excavated between the 4th and 7th centuries. The first cave is a monastery (vihara), 52 ft. sq. with eight cells. The second cave is a cathedral (chaitya), 48 ft. sq. exclusive of the lateral galleries on each side; it contains a profusion of sculptured images of Buddha in various postures; the galleries contain images of Buddha seated on a lotus in the teaching posture. The roof is supported by twelve massive columns arranged in a square and they have elegant cushion capitals and high square bases. The shrine contains a colossal Buddha image seated on a lion-throne and several images of Bodhisattvas, celestial beings and gatekeepers. There is one of Padmapani or Avalokitesvara holding a rosary in the right hand and a lotus stalk in the left.

The fifth cave is a spacious vihara 117 ft. x 58 ft. (exclusive of two large side recesses) with 24 pillars. This structure was used either as a guest-house or as a school.

The ante-chamber of the sixth cave has a number of interesting sculptures including one of Sarasvati, the goddess of Learning.

The tenth cave is a *chaitya* or cathedral, now called after Visvakarma, the god of craftsmanship. It has a highly ornamental facade consisting of a porch surmounted by a gallery leading to the ministered gallery within the chapel. A colossal image of Buddha is carved in front of the stupa. There are several features of structural interest in this cave. The head-piece design on the first text-page of our Journal adopted from its last number, is an adaptation from the facade of this cave.

The remaining two Buddhist caves are three-storied Viharas of very impressive structure and their excavation shows remarkable ingenuity, as they are of considerable size and accurate design, consisting of halls divided transversely into aisles by rows of pillars. In profusion of Buddha's images and of ornamentation, these Viharas excel all the other Buddhist caves. The technical aspect of Indian rock-hewn architecture reached its climax in these two three-storeyed Viharas of the 7th century.

### **Brahmanical Caves**

This group of 17 caves extends along the west face of the hill for about half a mile. These Hindu caves are more lavishly decorated than all the others, consisting of large sculptures, beautifully carved, depicting scenes of Hindu mythology. The most famous of this group of caves is the Kailasa Temple of the 8th century, the largest rock-hewn cave temple in India, standing in a court 154 ft. x 276 ft. with a scarp 107 ft. at the back. It is the finest and grandest monolithic excavation in the world and an outstanding achievement of Indian architects and sculptors. It stands in the centre of a vast court supported by rows of pilasters and the colossal carved elephants give this massive monolith an effect of being suspended in mid-air.

### **Jaina Caves**

These 5 caves are situated in the northern spur of the hill, about a mile and a half from the Kailasa Temple. Of these five temples, the "Court of Indra" (Indrasabha) and the "Court of Jagannatha" (Jagannathasabha) are the most remarkable. The former is two-storeyed and the larger, the upper story of which has been thus described by a competent authority : "No other temple at Ellora is so complete in its arrangements or so finished in its workmanship." Both in figure sculpture and in decorative motif, the artists have indeed produced works of considerable distinction. In the Court of Jagannatha is a seated image of Mahavira on a throne.

## **FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN ANCIENT INDIA**

We have seen how the ancient Indians had enjoyed freedom of thought and action both on social and religious matters and how the Vanaprasthas were as free as the air they inhaled and the water they

drank in the settlements made on the banks of rivers in the midst of forests. As the four classes into which they were divided had been free to intermarry and interdine with each other, it goes without saying that they had no communal divisions and formed a united body politic. It is probable that the Vanaprastha order of life was not fully developed during the Vedic period and that during the Unpanisad period it had its full development and made its power felt by the kings. Being an important branch of the Indo-European race, they must have carried with them the tradition and practice of self-government to India. Accustomed as they had been to the free political institutions of their ancestors, there is reason to believe that they continued to have the same form of government in their migration. Besides, their anxiety was rather to defend themselves and their new settlement against the Dasyus than to recast their traditional form of government. The study of the Vedas in the light thrown by the anthropomorphology of the Vedic Indians goes to show that they had no monarchical institutions. During the early days of the Vedic period they seem to have regulated the affairs of the settlement by an assembly of the people called Samiti. Apart from a military class of people called Ksatra and leaders or generals called Rajanah (in plural) to carry out their schemes of conquest they seem to have devised no hereditary monarchical institution. This view is supported by the anthropomorphic features of Indra's rule and the co-operative support which the other gods gave to Indra in his work.

Like the Vedic people the gods are also classes as Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. Indra, the Adityas, and the Rudras who are all fierce in their nature are Kshatriyas. Brihaspati, Sukra and others are Brahmanas. The Maruts are the Vaisyas, inasmuch as they carry the wealth-giving rain from place to place and make the whole of the land receive its due share of rainfall. They all stand equal to each other, though during the time of war Indra heads them. Indra takes the first rank and is called a ruler in virtue of the merit he has achieved by performing a hundred sacrifices. He holds his position so long as he maintains his conduct and character. He has his own enemies and rivals. Whoever among men performs a hundred sacrifices (Satakratu) or penance equivalent to it is considered to be fully qualified to oust Indra and occupy his throne. The Daityas, the sons of Diti, his stepmother, are his born enemies and ever watching for an opportunity to seize his throne and rule over the gods. Thus Indra is in constant fear both from men and demons and is obliged to be very careful in

the exercise of his power both over gods and sages. With a view to thwart men and demons from their ambitious aim at seizing his throne by performing a hundred sacrifices or penance, he sends beautiful celestial nymphs to divert them from virtue to sin. But the unique power he wields over men, gods and demons sometimes, turns him giddy and makes him unconscious of its limitations. Once he is said to have treated Brihaspati, his trusted minister, with contempt and consequently lost his throne. On another occasion, a sage called Durvasas possessing the power of curse meets him while he was going on in procession mounted on his white elephant called Airavata and presents him with a garland of flowers. He receives the garland and carelessly puts it on the head of the elephant. As usual with animals, the elephant catches hold of it with its trunk and casting it under its leg crushes it. The sage becomes enraged at the contempt with which Indra has treated the garland presented to him as a mark of respect and favour. He at once curses him to lose his power and render his throne vacant. On this occasion there was only one individual among men, Nahusa by name, who had qualified himself for the throne by performing a hundred sacrifices. With the unanimous consent of gods and men he goes to the heavenly world and ascends the throne. But the exalted position to which he was risen by the sheer force of his sacrificial merit turns him giddy and makes him lose all sense of moral propriety. He goes so far as to think that he has claim to Saci, the queen of the dethroned god, Indra. In reply to his call, the queen makes use of an artifice and asks him to come to her place borne on a palanquin by the seven sages. As anticipated by her, Nahusa urges the palanquin bearers to hurry on saying "Sarpa, sarpa." "run quickly, run quickly". Agastya, one of the seven sages bearing the conveyance and a little shorter and older than the others, becomes enraged at Nahusa's insulting words and curses him saying "Sarpobhava", "become a snake". Nahusa at once falls down from heaven, becoming a snake. At his immediate request, and prayer for mercy, the sage forgives him by putting a limit to the duration of his curse. He says that after he meets and carries on conversation on the question of Dharma and Adharma with Yudhishthira, a lineal descendant of his own lunar dynasty, he will regain his original form and return to the heaven.

There is however no reference to this story in the Vedas. There is an allusion to Nahusa's hundred sacrifices in the Brhaddevata. Nevertheless the incidents of the Puranic story cannot be said to belong

to the age of the Puranas when hereditary instead of elective monarchy prevailed throughout India.

The implications of the story are however the characteristics of a period when elective monarchy was prevalent. Corresponding to the Polytheistic form of the Vedic religion especially to its henotheistic aspect, in which prominence was given to particular deity in accordance with the power ascribed to him, the election of a man to power depended on the capacity he had to discharge the duty of the position. Corresponding to the class of warlike gods there was the class of the Kshatriyas or Rajas whose duty it was to defend the homes and hearth of the Aryans against their enemies, the Dasyus. The Kshatriyas were all called Rajans and the elected leader or chief of them seems to have been variously called Adhiraja, Samraj, or Svaraj according to the nature of the power exercised by him. The Aitareya Brahmana (1.14) speaks of a period when the Aryans had no king to lead them to a war against the Asuras and placed themselves under king Soma. The passage runs as follows :

“The Devas said; it is on account of our having no king that the Asuras defeat us. Let us elect a king. All consented. They elected Soma their king. Headed by king Soma, they were victorious in all directions.”

The use of word ‘Raja’ in the sense of a Kshatriya or soldier is borne out by the following passages of the Rigveda:

“Where a Brahman meets with herbs like Rajans in an assembly, he is called a physician, fiend-slayer and chaser of disease”. (X.97,6).

“Let us with our Rajans win victories and obtain wealth in battles.” (X.42,10).

There cannot possibly be many kings attending an assembly of people. Hence the word Rajanah seems to mean soldiers or generals. In the Atharva Veda the word Raja is used in various connections and it cannot appropriately be interpreted to mean a king. The phrase “Sajata rajanah” in the following passage means fellow soldiers, but not fellow-kings.

“Seize, Agni, on the power and firmly hold it; contend thou with the friend by way of friendship. Placed in the centre of fellow-Rajans, Agni, flash forth, frequently invoked here.” (A.V. II. 6,4).

Again in the following Vedic passage the word means soldiers or generals :

"Make me beloved among the gods, beloved among the Rajans, make me dear to every one who sees, and to Sudra and to Aryan man." (A.V.XIX. 62,1).

"Bestow splendour on our Brahmans; bestow splendour on our Rajans; bestow splendour on our Vaisyas and Sudras and bestow splendour over splendour on me." (Tait. S.V.7,6,4 & Vaj. S. 18,48).

In Rg. X.173 the poet prays for the safety and security of a king chosen for the time. Another poet prays in A.V.VI.88, for faithfulness and loyalty of the state assembly to the elected king. The Atharva Veda VI. 134 contains imprecating verses cursing a tyrant and praying for his downfall. In A.V.III. 3 a poet prays for the return of a banished king and his restoration to power. The Taittiriya Samhita (II. 3,1) records a rite and prayer for the confirmation in power of an elected king and for the defeat of his rival. In A.V.III. 5, 8; VI. 73,1,2,3; VI. 94; VII. 35; and XIX. 37 it is clearly stated that the troubles of an elected monarch were due to charriot-makers, artisans, troop-leaders, masters of the horse, the electors or kingmakers, his kinsmen, and lastly the people at large. In none of the hymns mention is made of troubles due to sons and wives, a lurking domestic danger as set forth in the Arthashastra of Kautilya. This state of things is in keeping with the inference that can be legitimately drawn from the anthropomorphic features of Indra's rule over gods and men. The tale narrated by the authors of the Puranas of Indra's rule is evidently a reflection of what had occurred among themselves on earth? The one vulnerable point in the mentality of ancient Indian writers is its tendency to be little humanity and regard its volitions, emotions and activities as whimsical and as deserving of no notice. To them all subjective phenomena appeared to be no less chaotic and disorderly than the objective phenomena. The working of the human mind was quixatic. They could discover no law and order in its activities. It was a wild elephant in rut and no restraint was strong enough to keep it under control. Mind is common to all and ever goes astray, no matter whether it is of a sage, a king or a peasant or an idiot. History of a nation is nothing but a record of the activities of the national mind and is therefore disorderly. Hence neither an individual nor a society is worth of study. This kind of thought seems to have driven the ancient Indians to devote



their mind and tongue to talk of gods, goddesses, their worlds, and their activities with no feeling of weariness and disgust. But it seems not to have dawned in their mind that in talking of gods and their institutions they could speak of nothing but their own experience and of their own imaginations. Their experience was entirely human and they could therefore speak of Gods in terms human with a little exaggeration here and there. Even now there are poets and composers of songs who consider it sinful to praise even good kings. The late Tyagaraja, the celebrated music composer of Southern India, composed all his original songs in praise of Rama and preferred the life of a beggar to the acquisition of wealth and power by composing songs in praise of kings. In doing this his consolation seems to have been that he had his Rama constantly before his mind and that therefore his life was worth living. It follows therefore that the salient features of Vedic and Puranic myths regarding the political activities of gods are more or less exact copies of political activities of the Aryans of the Vedic period. Considering the anthropomorphic features of Indra's rule we may come to the conclusion that during the Vedic period the ancient Indians lived under an elective monarchy and that they had an assembly of people similar to the Sabha or assembly of Indra. The duration of the sovereignty of the elected chief depended rather on his character and good conduct than on any military power on which he could never rely on account of rivals and factions. The assembly was all-powerful and could impeach, dethrone, and banish a king just as Indra was impeached, dethroned and banished. All the classes of the people had an equal status in the assembly like the various classes of gods in Indra's assembly.

This state of things continued till the period of the Upanisads when Brahma-panteism was substituted for the polytheism of the Vedic period. The one impersonal power of universal consciousness called Brahma ousted the various limited personal gods susceptible of malice, envy, hatred, mutual jealousy and other human frailties. Corresponding to this change in thought there seems to have occurred a change in political thought also. Elective monarchy was replaced by hereditary monarchy. The king was styled a Rajarsi, saintly king, whose duty it was to live a spiritual life and observe the ethical principles of the Upanishads. He has to work with no aspiration for the result of work for his own enjoyment. He has to shun all kinds of voluntary pursuit after objective pleasures. We read in the Upanishads of the

principles which Janaka and other kings had observed in the administration of their kingdoms. On the absolute idealism of the Upanishads are based the principles of morality, and economical and political life of the ancient Indian. There can possibly be no better solution of the hard problem of unequal distribution of wealth than the doctrine of work with no attachment to the fruits of action; nor can there be a better restraint of desire, greed and other passions than control of the will and the senses by Nivrtti or withdrawal from pursuit after objective pleasures of the world. When once the disposal of surplus wealth by performance of sacrifices or by charitable works is brought into practice and when once the mind and the will are brought under control by the observance of yogic practices, there is neither the likelihood nor the possibility of any economical or political disturbance. The institution of the Vanaprastha order of life was mainly for the promotion of moral, economical, political, intellectual and spiritual ends. No spiritual goal is attained unless moral and other social pursuits are carefully directed so as to be conducive to the attainment of the spiritual goal. In the view of the ancient Indians all human activities are either intellectual or physical, self being a mere witness of those activities. Not knowing the true nature of the self and mistaking intellect or the physical body itself for the self, man is likely to absorb himself either in intellectual or physical activities and thus commit moral, economical and political crimes. With the realisation of the nature of self, on which the conquest of the mind and the will is dependent, there is not the least possibility of man falling into errors. This is the fundamental principle of Hindu philosophy on which all kinds of sociological theories are based unlike the detached theories expounded by the western scholars to explain the various phases of human life, which is after all an Unit. I cannot therefore agree with Prof. A.B. Keith in saying 'That the Upanishads do not feel any serious necessity for finding a place for morality and political life; while in the west from Hegel onwards heroic, if unsuccessful, efforts have been made by the followers of this ideal to establish morality and civil life as an essential in the absolute.

The period of the Upanishads may be presumed to lie between B.C. 2000 and B.C. 100 according to the late B.G. Tilak and others and B.C. 1000 and B.C. 100 according to Western scholars. It was a period of peace and intellectual and spiritual activity following on the period of wars and conquest of Northern India by the Aryans. It may

be appropriately compared to the peaceful and intellectual activities of the western world in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Corresponding to the realists, the Monists, and the Idealists we have in India the Caravakas, the Aupasakas and the non-dualists. In a narrow sense the Buddhists and the Jainas may be compared to the followers of agnosticism. While the number of different schools of philosophers in that period in the east is as great as that in the west in the two preceding centuries and even at the present, the conspicuous difference between the worlds is that while the east was earnest in bringing its religious and philosophical precepts into practice as far as possible, the west seems to satisfy itself with the mere exposition of its various philosophical theories.

Notwithstanding the absence of histories and biographies regarding the saintly life of Indian philosophers and true religious devotees who observed their religious and philosophical precepts to the very letter, there is yet enough of literary records to show that with the ancient Indians there was no wide gulf between religious theories and their practical applications. Confining our attention to historical personages we cannot fail to admire the self-less activities of Mahavira during the reign of Srenika in Magadha, the Buddha and his followers in Benares and other parts of Northern India, *Canakya* in the court of *Candragupta*, Upagupta and his followers in the Empire of Asoka, Patanjali, the founder of the Yoga philosophy during the reign of Pusya Mitra, the Jaina ascetic Padalipta and his disciples during the reign of the Sakas. Vasubandhu, the Buddhist teacher, and his followers during the ascendancy of the Guptas, Merutunga, a Jaina ascetic and Bana and Mayura, the celebrated Brahman poet-philosophers, in the court of Harsavardhana, Vidyananda, Bhattakalanka, Jinasena, and other Jaina teachers, Samkaracarya, Sivagnana Sombandhiar, Vagisa. Tirumangaylvar and other Brahman philosophers expounding the principle of self-denial on the basis of Advaita, Saivism or Vaisnavism in the reign of Srivallabha in the south, Hemacandra and his colleagues at the court of Kumarapala in Guzarat, Halayudha during the reign of the Kakatiyas in Varanguj, and Vidyaranya during the commencement of the empire of Vijaynagar.

All these teachers preached in one loud and continuous voice the worthlessness of the physical and the intellectual culture and the paramount importance of self-culture and self-realisation. It is

wellknown to students of Indian history how Upagupta, one of the most distinguished Buddhist teachers, succeeded in converting Asoka, the Maurya Emperor of India, to Buddhism and in impressing on his mind the laws of Dharma; and how the emperor realising the truth relinquished the pomp and luxury of his imperial palace and found contentment and joy in living like an ascetic in a monastery. A perusal of his memorable edits will show how after he embraced Buddhism he found it possible to live in peace and joy and to win the love not only to his subjects, but also of his enemies both within and without his empire. As a Buddhist monk he had no necessity to change his beds at night in order to safeguard his personal safety from enemies aiming at his life. Nor was there any need for him to increase his army and maintain it in efficient condition to ensure the safety and security of his empire. All this change for better in his life was due to his relinquishment of his sensual life which was worth more than the revenue of his empire and to his life of self-denial which was far cheaper and more enjoyable than that of a peasant in a hut.

Of the life which Chanakya lived as a Brahman house-holder when the whole of the empire of Nanda with Candragupta, his nominee, at its head was at his feet, the author of the *Mudra-raksasa* speaks as follows :—(III. 15)

“This is the stone piece to split into small pieces the dried cowdung balls (to kindle the sacrificial fire) this is a heap of kusagrass by his bachelor students; this is his dilapidated hut, the thatched roof of which is bent down by bundles of fire-kindling wooden sticks placed thereon for being dried (in the sun).”

The author of the drama was not however a contemporary of Chanakya and it is probable that his description of Chanakya's life is rather an exaggeration than a fact. Still it must be noted that the ideal of life which a householder has to live is of the kind which the dramatist has given expression to. A simple selfless life, even in an environment of luxury and pomp, is what has been enjoined in the *Sutras* and *Dharmashastras*. Speaking of his own simple life as a Brahman householder Halayudha says in his *Brahmana Sarvasva* as follows :

“In whose house there shine wooden vessels along with golden vessels apart in another corner, there hang garments as white as

the moon alongwith deer's skin apart in another corner; there rises in volume the smoke due to the pouring of oblations into the fire alongwith the smoke of fragrance apart in some another corner. Thus the fire-ritual together with what may be termed its beneficial results expected after life is simultaneously visible."

The luxury of golden vessels and costly white garments for which Halayudha seems to have cared a straw are evidently the presentations made by the king under whom he was the chief judicial officer. This office he seems to have accepted not as a means to earn hoards of wealth, but merely as a social service, the only earthly end of his learning. The other and the only end of his life was self-realisation which he had in view and practice. There can be no doubt that the influence which a minister like Chanakya and a judicial officer like Halayudha brought to bear upon the life of the kings they served not in their own interests, but in the interest of the kings themselves was for the good of the country at large.

Coming to the like of Patanjali and his life-works on Grammar and Yoga philosophy, it is unnecessary to say that the benefited by his exemplary life not merely his contemporaries, both kings and people, but also the Indian posterity even to the present day. I have already spoken of the economical motive of Vedic sacrifices. Patanjali's participation in the horse-sacrifice performed by Pusyamitra, as implied by his statement made in the Mahabhasya "we shall cause Pusyamitra to sacrifice" goes to prove that besides being a Yoga philosopher not caring for sacrifices, he was also for sacrifices as an economical measure conducive to spiritual life.

It was as binding upon a king as upon his wealthy subjects to spend the surplus earnings so as to ensure public good. Besides the construction of wells, tanks gardens, roads and other public works, ancient Indian kings undertook the performance of Vedic sacrifices to find an outlet for their surplus revenue. The other source of expenditure is enjoyment or pleasure-seeking pursuits. But instead of mitigating desire for new forms of pleasure, search for pleasure augments it. "Never," says a Sanskrit adage, does desire for pleasure subside by enjoyment; it grows on the other hand stronger and stronger like fire with clarified butter poured over it." Hence the best way of getting rid of surplus wealth is in the view of ancient Indians charity or sacrifice. Following this custom under the advice of Patanjali and other saintly

persons Pusyamitra performed a horse-sacrifice and disposed of the surplus revenue of his empire.

How Kumarapala, king of Guzarat, instituted under the advice of Hemacandra a number of hospitals and feeding houses to alleviate the misery of the afflicted and the needy and how under the guidance of Vidyaranya, the kings of Vijayanagara, Bukka and Harihara spent their state-revenue in the construction of tanks, canals, temples, mathas, agraharas and other charitable works is a historical fact too wellknown to need a description here.

This from of ethico-political teachings carried on by the Vedantins, the Buddhists and the Jainas terminates about the fourth century A.D. and is followed by what is called Agama and Pancaratra systems of religion and ethics. As already pointed out, this religion is Dravidian in its origin and Aryan in its development. Having Siva or Visnu as a personal god, it is purely an idolatrous form of worship. In its ethical and philosophical aspects it follows the Upanishads. The Brahma-Sutras treating of the nature of Brahma and of the principles of interpretation of the Upanishads are commented upon by Saivites and Vaisnavites substituting Siva or Visnu for Brahma. The political theory based upon this Agamic form of worship is quite different from that based upon the polytheism of the Vedas or the pantheism of the Upanishads.

As already pointed out, the king of the Aryans during the Vedic period was more or less a servant of the assembly of the people and had to follow its behests or suffer from banishment. During the period of the Upanishads he had to live the life of a Rajarsi or an ascetic king having his will and senses under his control or had to fall a prey to his enemies. In the Agamic period the king was merely a servant of Siva or Visnu in whose name he had to administer the state. In many native states in Southern India it is usual with the kings of wear garments of yellow colour and put on a turban of yellow colour while drawing alongwith his subjects and other people the care of the tutelary deity of their states during the car festival. The king is the chief servant of the temple. In the first Didhiti of his Rajadharma Kaustubha, Ananta Deva, son of Khanda Deva, says as follows :—"In the Srimadbhagavata the king is said to acquire his right of ownership of lands of all kinds in the state (Sarvaprakarabhumisvamyā) only in virtue of his having set up idols of gods in a temple. 'He acquires the ownership of all the

land in virtue of his setting up idols of gods; of the three worlds in virtue of his erecting temple; of the abode of Brahma in virtue of his making endowments for the worship of gods; and he will attain equality with me (god Krisna) in virtue of his performance of all the three.' Likewise in the Visnudharmottara :—"Kings desirous of attaining to heaven should in the Kali age set up cities after erecting temples." Here the word 'cities' implies villages and fortified towns also. The verse quoted from the Bhagavata lays down that a king who is desirous of acquiring the ownership of cities, towns and the like which he establishes should at first erect temples. Whoever is desirous of acquiring such ownership in virtue of his being anointed as a king the erection of temples, palaces, and the like are mentioned first. In the verse of Bhagavata the king is said to acquire ownership of all the land in virtue of setting up of idols of gods and temples. In this connection there crop up two alternatives : whether the word 'Mahipala' in the verse means a person who is already exercising his royal duties, as stated in the *Prima facie* view in the Mimamsa Sūtras of Jaimini (II.3,3) or any other person of the ruling caste, as stated in the conclusion of the commentary on the same *sūtras*. It cannot be the first meaning, for in that case there is no necessity for the anointment of such a person as a king. Nor is the erection of temple etc. the duties of a person who is already exercising his royal duties; for the right to observe such duties is dependent upon his acquisition of that power by buildings etc. Nor can it be the second, *i.e.* any person of the ruling caste, for in that case the construction of palaces and temples etc. which can be undertaken by any person irrespective of his caste and creed would become a spiritual duty of a Kshatriya. The reply is 'Not so', for though the erection of palaces and temples in general be undertaken by any man, still the construction of such buildings prior to the work of laying out cities and villages can be regarded as a special duty of a person of Kshatriya caste in view of his acquiring the right of sovereignty. In fact only such a person as is possessed of bravery, martial courage and other manly qualities befitting him to be a capable protector of people is regarded as worthy of being anointed as a king. Hence alongwith qualities such as bravery, courage and capacity to protect, the construction of temples and other buildings befits a person to be a sovereign.

There is no doubt that this new theory of theocratic monarchy was propounded and practised in mediaeval India. The existence of a

great number of temples in the ruined capital towns of kings in mediaeval India, especially in the Dekhan proves it beyond doubt. One of the most interesting of the fundamental political principles that deserves our attention here is the question relating to a king's right of ownership of land and man. This is an important question that has long been exercising the minds of statesman and politicians all the world over and has not yet been definitely settled. The question is whether an emperor or his feudal chief can justly claim and exercise his right of ownership over the land and men in his state. This has been answered in two different ways. The Mimamsakas or the school of the Vedic exegetics headed by Jaimini hold that neither an emperor (Sarvabhauman) nor a feudal chief (Mandalika) is justified in exercising any right of ownership over the state land or his people; whether, father, mother or children or his servants. They say that he is only entitled to a fixed share of revenue in king in virtue of his protective care and that the land and other natural things of the state are common to all. This is the conclusion arrived at by Jaimini and his commentators who have discussed the point in all its bearing (Mimamsa Sutrās, VI.7,2).

Quite opposed to this is the view held by Kautilya the author of the Arthashastra. He says for example, that the king shall exercise his right of ownership with regard to fishing, ferrying and trading in vegetables in reservoirs or lakes (II.1); that besides collecting revenue, the king shall keep as state monopoly both mining and commerce (II.12); and in view of justifying the levy of an extra water-tax (II.24) his commentator Bhattasvami, quotes a verse in which the state ownership of land and water is clearly mentioned. The verse runs as follows :

“Those who are well versed in the Sashtas admit that the king is the owner of both land and water and that the people can only exercise their right of ownership over all other things except these two. (p. 144, Eng. Tra.)

The view that is held by the Mimamsakas seems to be the view that is still current in the transaction of the villagers in India, whenever, they sell a piece of land, they declare in the bond the transfer of eight kinds of enjoyment, such as (1) *nidhi* (treasure-trove), (2) *niksepa* (deposit hidden in the earth), (3) water, (4) trees, (5) stones, (6) *agami*, anything that may come in future. (7) *samcita*, anything that is standing, and (8) *Aksina*, imperishable. This declaration is evidently



opposed to the view held by Kautilya and other later politicians who held that any treasure-trove contained in the earth, any deposit of money and the like concealed in the earth, the salt and other minerals together with water are what the king alone can justly claim as his property.

As the Mimamsaka view of land-tenure is in agreement not merely with the history of social evolution all the world over, but with the nature of the political constitution which obtained in India during the Vedic and the Brahmanic periods, the historical importance of Jaimini's view on this question cannot be overvalued. Hence I add here below my own translation of the Sutras of Jaimini together with the commentaries of Partha Sarathy Misra :

The Sutras (VI. 7,2) are thus commented upon by Partha Sarathy Misra :

It is declared in the Vedas that in the Visvajit sacrifice the sacrificer makes a gift of all that is his own. There as to the doubt whether even the cognates that are designated by the word 'Sva,' 'one's own,' are to be given over or only such wealth as he can claim to be his own, it may be asserted that in the absence of particularisation, all that is implied by the word 'Sva' one's own should be given over; for it is possible to render father and others subservient to others; the act of bringing a thing under the ownership of another man is what is meant by a gift, hence father and others should also be given over :—But it is not so; evidently they cannot be given over as a gift, in as much as a gift in the real sense of the world means 'the relinquishing of one's ownership of a thing and placing it under the ownership of another; accordingly (a father cannot be given over) for a father cannot become no-father, though he is given over. But only that which can be called one's own in virtue of his exercising his right of lordship over it can be given over as a gift; for, when such a thing is gifted, the giver gets rid of his ownership and the donee acquires it. Also the word 'sva', one's own, means in virtue of its divers significant power 'self', 'one's own', 'cognates' and 'wealth'. Of these several meanings, it means a single particular meaning in a particular context. Since among the meanings, it is only the wealth that forms a proper article of gift, the word 'sva' is here used only in that sense. Hence only wealth, but not father and others.

As to the question whether that which is the broad earth should be gifted or not the holder of the *prima facie* view speaks of it as an article of gift, thinking that it is the wealth of the emperor. But it is not one's property (*sva*). Consisting as it does in the protection of, and the removal of the wicked from, his state, sovereignty (*rajya*) means the collection of taxes from the agriculturists and others and of fines from the guilty (*dandya*); this much is the relation (between the king and his state), but no lordship or ownership (*svamita*). Hence no emperor shall make a gift of the broad earth, nor a feudal chief his feudal land.

As to the doubt, whether a *sudra* who attends upon a master as his servant in view of doing the religious duty should be given over as a gift or not, it may be said that he should be given over, inasmuch as it is inclusively favoured by the epithet "all" and also it is possible to render him subservient to another. But as there is no master's ownership with reference to him and as there is the possibility of dislike on his part to accept sub-serviency to another, he should not be given over as a gift.

In the seventh discourse of his *Vivada-bhangarnava*, Jagannatha Tarkapancanana agrees with the Mimamsakas in the view that the king is no owner of the land and the king is entitled only to certain amount of tax on it, the cultivator of the land being by time-honoured custom its real owner with right of alienation. The context in which he states this view is the sale of the slave girl by one of many brothers, in the house of each of whom she is made to work in turn, as agreed upon during the time of the division of inheritance. The slave woman is compared to the land which may change hands by sale. The translation of the text is as follows :

Brahaspati says that a single woman should be made to work in each house (*i.e.*, the house of each of the brothers) according to the share of the inheritance. Well, there arises a doubt here whether the slave woman should or should not go to work on the appointed days in the houses of other brothers, if she is sold to a stranger by one of the brothers on the day when she had to work in the seller's house, we reply thus : the purchaser has acquired the same kind of property right in her that the seller had in her before selling. Hence the purchaser had the right to command her service only for as many days as she attended on her seller by turns in the middle of each month. It is also

for this reason that in the kingdom (country) purchased by a king, his right of possession of the country extends only to the collection of taxes on it; and at the same time there remains the right of ownership vested in the cultivator, in virtue of which he is entitled to the produce. Hence also the claim of a cultivator who cultivates a piece of land and enjoys the produce after paying taxes due to the king, to its ownership is admitted on all hands. Hence it is that when the owner of the land sells the land, the purchaser acquires the same right of ownership in virtue of which he is entitled to its enjoyment after paying the taxes due to the king; and that the cultivator's ownership of the land is never denied, as such denial is quite opposed to custom (*vyavahara*). Since various kinds of ownership with regard to a single property are accepted, it must be presumed that the claims of two different persons to the same kind of ownership with regard to a property are opposed to each other.

Notwithstanding the conflicting views regarding the ownership of land, it is a historical fact that in those states in which a theocratic form of government was established with Siva or Visnu as a tutelary deity the whole of the state land is believed to be the property of the temple, the king being regarded as the manager of the property. In Travancore the king is even now regarded as a servant of Padmanabha, tutelary deity of the state and is called Padmanabhadasa. The kings of Vijayanagar called themselves servants of Virupaksa, their family god. The surplus of the state-revenue that remained after administrative and military expenditures are met with, is made use of for religious purposes in connection with the state-temple. The kings of Vijayanagar, the Colas, the Pandyas and the Ceras seem to have spent a major portion of the revenue on temple-worship and on the costly periodical car festivals. Feeding the poor of all castes in the temples seems to have been the duty not only of kings, but also of the wealthy people. Even theft for the purpose of feeding the poor in the temple seems to have been considered no punishable crime. One of the sixty-three Saivite saints is said to have been acquitted and permitted to take as much rice as he liked from the store of grains made in the palace, when brought before the king for punishment for stealing rice from the palace store, he confessed that his theft of rice was for no other purpose than that of feeding the poor devotees in the state temple. Nor there seems to have been any caste distinction either among the early Saivites or the Vaisnavites. It is believed that the Saivites form a single caste and

that the Vaisnavites another caste with no sub-castes or sects among themselves. No distinction other than that of learning and exemplary devotion is ever made among the devotees. The rule of practice observed of them is "To him should be given and from him should be taken,"— This is the rule binding upon all the devotees of the same religion, whatever might be their Varna or caste. "Tasmai deyam tato grahyam trisu varnesvayam vidhih." The Ramanujacarya's grant of permission to the Adikarnatakas of his time to enter into the temple of god Kesava at Belur for worshipping the gods for three days during the annual car festival is an extension of the same principle, *i.e.*, no caste-distinction among the followers of the same religion. This spirit of religious equality seems to have undergone a change for the worse under the lead of Vedantadesika during the latter part of the thirteenth century. Before his time the rule of equal treatment of all followers of the same religion quoted above seems to have been applied even to intermarriage and interdining irrespective of caste. Vedantadesika, however, seems to have restricted the rule to all other acts of social intercourse except intermarriage and interdining, and thus paved the way for the appearance of rigid caste distinctions among the followers of the same religion. The reintroduction of such distinctions in social and religious matters between man and man due to birth seems to have given rise to distinctions in political sphere also, and the Brahmans seem to have claimed and received more social, religious and political privileges than others. The endowments of temples and other religious institutions seems to have been monopolised by them and the ruling class for their own material aggrandisement. This is however a selfish turn and abuse of the ancient ethical theory of action with no aspiration for the enjoyment of the results of that action. The later Brahmans took themselves to temple-worship solely for the material benefits accruing from it. The kings tolerated them, chiefly because they wanted their approval of their own sensual indulgence, as opposed to the saintly life, self-abnegation (*Rajarsivrtta*) in accordance with the ethical and spiritual principles of the Upanishads. They became lords of temples instead of temple servants. The revenue of the state went into their palace treasury for the benefit of women and countries instead of the temple treasury for the feeding of the poor with no distinction of caste. It is this form of despotism which prevailed throughout India when the British arrived here.

The evils of despotism are rather economic than anarchic. With

a view to finance their sensual activities despots are always careful to maintain law and order in their states with as much rigour as possible. It was in their power to introduce such fiscal laws as would fill their treasury. But the time the Agamic theocratic form of government was established in Indian states, civil and criminal laws were consolidated and regarded as being susceptible of no change. They were administered in accordance with the Dharmashastras. Hence fiscal policy was the only factor that was liable to change and disturb the economical equilibrium of the states. There were however three forms of restraints to check the autocracy of the kings : (1) the Religious (2) the Ethical and (3) the Political. The religious restraint of the law of Karma, according to which, any individual, no matter whether he is a prince or a pauper, given to sensual proceedings, is liable to rebirth, and suffering from the evil consequences of his past Karma. The second is the loss of spiritual bliss due to the violation of the moral law of doing work with no selfish aspiration for the fruits thereof. The third is the disaffection and disloyalty of the subjects due to unrighteous oppression leading to war and danger to state itself. The first dependent upon faith and the last two on reason and sound public opinion. A king going against public opinion is *adharmika* since *dharma* is based upon social imperative or command as defined by Jaimini in his Mimamsa Sutas.

In his Vakyartharatna Ahobala says regarding the source of moral sense as follows :

“But Guru (Prabhakara) says that so far as secular activity is concerned, whatever is fit, and possible to be worked out (Karya or duty) as mirrored in the opinion of elders in society is (ought to be) a motive for work.”

The Naiyayikas or the logicians define a good motive for work as “Balavadanistananubandhi Kritisadyata Jnanam Pravartakam” i.e., whatever is not seriously harmful and is at the same time possible of being accomplished is a duty and it is as a motive an incentive for action. According to Prabhakara it is the public opinion that enables one to understand the nature of duty. It follows therefore that proceedings opposed to public opinion are immoral and are therefore ruinous. During the period of the Upanishads the elders in society whose opinion was authoritative and binding were the Vanaprasthas. No king who cared for the safety of his person and the security of his kingdom would forfeit the regard and good wishes of the hermits and

thus endanger both his life and throne. During Agamic period the pious band of temple-worshippers of the type of the Saivite sixty-three saints and the Vaisnavite Alvars formed the home of social opinion decisive of good and bad and right and wrong course of action. Defiance of their opinion spelled danger to the safety of the state. Being of a warlike temperament, the Saivites were ever ready to eradicate impiety and sensuality from the kingdom of their god Siva, among whose servants the king was the head. Though naturally peace loving, the Vaisnavites were not cowards in such matters. They were no less ready to put an end to impiety and sensuality in the kingdom of their god, Visnu. Thus the religious, ethical, and political restraints which the ancients brought to bear upon the conduct of their rulers were no less formidable than the constitutional brakes devised to arrest the precipitate speed of the state-engine. In modern European states the king or the president as the executive head is made subordinate to the legislature and the judiciary whose independence in the interpretation and the administration of the state-law is maintained with scrupulous care and, as it were, with a sort of religious dread. The power of the peoples' representatives over the state purse is so unquestionable that the state machine can be made to standstill until the errors of the executive in their financial administration are set right to the satisfaction of the representatives. Nevertheless the economic evils even in the model democratic states of Europe and America have grown so serious that a new class of critics known as socialists and communists come forward and began to question the ethical aspect of the basic principles of democracy or parliamentary government itself. Seeing the growing poverty of the workers, the increasing concentration of the capital in a few hands, the consequent depression of the small capitalist into a dependent of the master-class, the extension of the market to the whole world as a unit with the resultant solidarity of labour the whole world over, the socialists have come to the conclusion that economic necessity is the real foundation upon which all other parts of social structure must be built. In his *Communism* p. 53 H.J. Laski says that "regarding parliamentary government the sceptic might reasonably interject the observation that we are witnessing its increasing rejection rather than its increasing acceptance." With its military organisation the modern democratic state has proved too strong to be destroyed as easily as the mediaeval states were. Having the means of securing the goodwill of the people's representatives Capitalism has grown in power under the

disguised form of imperialism. The socialists are of opinion that 'law, religion, politics, philosophy—all these born of the reaction upon the human mind of the methods by which men wrest from nature the necessary means of life. Hence those who control the means occupy in a society a place of special power : it is a governing class. In short society consists of two classes; those who control and those who are controlled.

As a remedy for this anomalous state they purpose the abolition of private property and of the master class. Towards this end they purpose the seizure of machinery of the state, to replace the official class by socialists, to repress capitalism, to substitute corporation of workers consisting of legislature and executive for parliamentary government and lastly to keep the army in the hands of the workers. They say that Parliament fools the common people.

This, however, seems to be a wild dream. Apart from the question of its feasibility and of its productivity of the desired end, *viz.*, "From each according to his power and to each according to his needs", the consequences of Russian revolution are believed to disprove the theory. "Broadly speaking" says H.J. Laski (*Communism* p.50), "there would not be much disagreement with the view that after a premature attempt at Communism the Bolsheviks have reintroduced some of the normal features of a capital economy limited, however, by vigorous state control.

From this it follows that form of government is least likely to change human nature. Whatever may be the form, whether despotism, oligarchy, or democracy, some grow rich with the majority remaining poor. It is a fact. Whether it is due to the Hindu Karma theory or to what is called heredity, we need not discuss the question. Taking inequality as a natural fact the ancient Indian economists devised the ethico-economical solution of filling the pit with the soil taken from the elevated land in proportion to its extra rise in level. As already pointed out, they proposed to confiscate the surplus that remains after allowing an individual what is enough to maintain himself and his family for three years and to distribute the amount thus collected among the poor as capital for earning. In his social philosophy of Comte Edward Caird says (p.36) that "the higher must stoop to conquer the lower, by submission to it; that those who are morally and intellectually great should learn self-abnegation and lead the lower, that they cease

to influence men if they try to dominate them; that a purely altruistic and intellectual being in whom personal motives do not exist would be best fitted to lead". We need not pause here to enter into a discussion of the merits and demerits of this economical solution. The main point under our consideration is the comparative worth of the political restraints and checks applied to arrest the precipitate pursuit of a wrong course by the state machinery. It is clear from the foregoing exposition of the ethico-political restraints of the ancient Indians as compared with the constitutional checks of modern parliamentarism that economically the mediaeval Hindu states fared far better under their theocratic form of government than modern European states under their parliamentary form of government. Neither in ancient nor in mediaeval India was there any possibility for despotic form of government to exist. The least propensity of a king to pursue a course of what are called seven vices, woman, liquor, gambling, hunting, etc., was enough to bring about disaffection of his people and give an opportunity to usurpers to seize his kingdom with the cooperation of his disaffected subjects. Such rise and fall of kings did not affect the condition of the people. It was a misery of the kings and not of people. It is wellknown that when war was going on between Tippu and the English near Sirangapatam, the people were engaged in their agriculture and other possible pursuits with as much peace of mind as if there was no war. Nor did ancient warfare dislocate the economic condition of the people as much as modern European warfare. The reason is that while ancient warfare was only between armies, modern warfare is between the opposing peoples themselves. Hence it was quite necessary to be vigilant and base the security of his throne on the loyalty of his prosperous people. Despotism with all its terrors and miseries, was unknown to mediaeval Indian states and it reigns supreme in most of modern Indian native states. With the exception of Mysore, Travancore and other few native states, the rest are under the worst type of despotism. Despots are human beings, and are therefore susceptible of at least some humane qualities. In their own interests they are sometimes kind to their subjects and it is easy for a host of sycophants and flatterers to flourish under the darkness of their dissipation. The causes of their despotic proceedings are not far to seek. The modern constitutional form of government with its wholesome checks has not dawned there. They are benighted lands ever in the dark. Of the ancient religious, ethical and political checks, they have all disappeared under the thunder of



European sciences and machine-guns. With the spread of the knowledge of modern experimental sciences, belief in transmigration, and spiritual pleasure was driven out. Fear of sin and of rebirth to reap the harvests of seeds sown in the previous birth have received the name of superstition unworthy of entertainment by men of scientific education living with modern enlightenment. Spiritual pleasure is the dream of a diseased brain. It is only the idiots and the insane that do action with no aspiration for the fruits there. Sunk in physical and sensual pleasures, the princes have no time to spare to cultivate intellect and enjoy its pleasures. The princes are quite safe now and spend their life in pursuit of pleasure at all costs. The seven vices are now seven pleasures for them. The whole of their state revenue is quite insufficient for them. They not only rackrent their people, but also mortgage their states for the sake of money to spend on the seven pleasures. This is certainly worse than despotism. European historians are quite justified in applying the word despotism to the form of government prevailing in most of our native states at the present time. But to apply the same epithet to the forms of government that were prevalent in the ancient and mediaeval native states of India, before the advent of the Mohammedans and the British is not only unreasonable, but a positive encouragement to most of the princes to continue their wickedness under the delusion that their ancestors had on better form of government. It is high time that the princes should as soon as possible introduce the modern constitutional form of government in their states. It is impossible for them to revive the ancient ethico-political form of government or theocracy, for the environment and other conditions that were congenial for the preservation of their vitality have long disappeared and cannot be revived.

*(R. Shamshastri)*

# 10

## Harijans' Social Status in Vedic Period

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### I

#### Harijan Rishis

Untouchability in India, like similar phenomena in other parts of the world, is ultimately traceable to race conflict and colour prejudice. The Sanskrit word for colour and complexion (*varna*=Gujarati *van*) came also to mean caste later on. The Indo-Aryans were of a fair complexion, and the Indians who obstructed their advance and whom the Aryans called Dasas or Dasyus were a dark people. Indra, the most prominent of the gods of the Aryans, is described in the Rigveda as protecting the Aryan *varna* and suppressing the Dasa *varna*.

In another place Indra is described as the killer of the Dasyu and the increaser of Manu, *i.e.*, the Aryan man :

Again the same god is spoken of as punishing the unbelievers and giving up to Manu the dusky skin :

The Dasas were foemen worthy of the Indo-Aryan steel, as can be seen from the numerous prayers for succour in battle, which the Rigveda has prescribed for us. But the day went against them, and Dasa came to mean slave or servant on account of the Dasas being frequently taken captive by the Aryans in war. The history of this word is similar to that of the word 'slave' which at first only meant a captive Slave in the hands of the Teutons.\*

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\* Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology*.

There were three classes in Indo-Aryan society, the Brahmans or teachers, the Kshatriyas or fighters, and Vaishyas or the commons, and a fourth class, that of Shudras, was created for the Dasas.

Although the Dasas were separately classed, it appears that there was nothing to prevent a man belonging to the first-three classes from contracting a marriage with a woman of the fourth class. Thus the mother of Mahidas Aitareya the reputed author of the Aitareya Brahmana, was probably a Shudra woman. And Kavasha Ailusha, the author of some Rigvedic hymns including X-30, was the son of a Dasi according to the Aitareya Brahmana (VIII-1). The Rishis held a sacrificial session on the banks of the Saraswati but excluded Kavasha from it and left him to die of thirst in a desert. Kavasha then *saw* this hymn, and the waters of the Saraswati came rushing to the place where he was. Upon this the Rishis repented, called Kavasha back and learnt that hymn from him. Kavasha's hymns are like many other hymns in the Rigveda, there is nothing very remarkable about them, but they are important as the first authentic utterance of a man of mixed Aryan and proto-Indian descent.

## II

### The Status of the Shudra

Shudras could not only enter into marital relations with the first-three classes, but they also took part in Vedic rites and ceremonies. For instance we are told in the Rigveda that the Five Peoples brought sacrifice to Agni.

According to an authority quoted by Yaska, the Five Peoples stand for the four classes and the Nishadas, a friendly proto-Indian tribe :

In another Rigvedic passage Agni is called chief priest of all the races five' (Griffith) :

Uvata's and Mahidhara's comments on this *mantra* (Vajasaneyi Samhita XXVI-9) expressly recognise the right of the four classes and the Nishadas to offer sacrifice :

Then again the sacred Soma juice is said to be 'pressed among the Races Five :

And the sacred river Saraswati is described as making the Five

Peoples flourish :

But one cannot offer sacrifice or press the Soma juice without at least a nodding acquaintance with Vedic learning. Shudras must therefore have been allowed to study the Vedas also. The Upanishads tell us about a Shudra king Janashruti seeking knowledge from a Rishi called Raikva, and the story of Satyakama Jabala a boy of mixed parentage who was taken up as a pupil by the Rishi Gautama simply because he told 'the truth about himself, can now be read in Gurudev Tagore's Bengali as well as in the Chhandogya Upanishad (IV-4).

Indeed it has been admitted by the writer in the *Historians History of the World* published by the London Times that the condition of the Shudras was very much better than that of the public slaves under some ancient republics, and indeed, that of the villains of the Middle Ages, or any other servile class with which we are acquainted'.

That was the reason why Greek observers of ancient India reported that 'every Indian is free' (Arrian's *Indica*, chap. X) and in *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (McCrindle) we find the following statement :

"A remarkable existing Indian custom prescribed by their ancient philosophers is .... admirable; for the law ordains that no one among them shall, under any circumstances, be a slave, but that, enjoying freedom, they shall respect the equal right to it which all possess, for those, *they thought*, who have learned neither to domineer over nor to cringe to others will attain the life best adapted for all vicissitudes of lot".

(V.G.D.)

## VITALITY OF HINDU CIVILISATION

### I

Mr. P.N. Bose, B.Sc. (London), the worthy son-in-law of Mr. R.C. Dutt and the author of a *History of Hindu Civilisation under British Rule*, has recently brought out a book on *Epochs of Civilisation*, which is a valuable addition to historico-sociological literature. In his usual simple, perspicuous and pleasant style, Mr. Bose enunciates in this book a theory of civilisation which may not be altogether new, but which is

laid down, for the first time, in a definite and categorical form, and fully developed and elaborated by this learned and thoughtful writer. It may be briefly stated thus :

The history of human progress may be divided into three epochs. The first epoch (B.C. 6000-2000) comprises the history of the earlier civilisations of Egypt, Babylone and China. The second epoch (about B.C. 2000-700 A.D.) comprises the late civilisations of Egypt and China and the civilisations of India, Greece, Rome Assyria, Phoenicia, and Persia. We are living in the third epoch, which commenced about 700 A.D. The most important fact of this epoch is the rise and progress of Western civilisation. Every epoch civilisation may be divided into three stages. In the first stage matter dominates the spirit, military prowess calls forth the greatest admiration, culture, being related to the gratification of the senses, takes the form of the Fine Arts. The second stage is characterised by intellectual development. It is the age of Reason, of Science and militarism it on the decline. The third or final stage is the stage of spiritual development.

“Happiness is sought for from within, rather than from without, by self-denial rather than by self-individual Arts and industries which promote bodily comforts and luxuries have hardly any share of the situation of the thoughtful. Painting and sculpture of idealised. Religion becomes altogether subjective among the enlightened, and partly so among the important. Suppression of egoism and cultivation.....tend to become the rule of life with the under. Such virtues as self-sacrifice and benevolence become more widely diffused than ever before. The student militarism of the second stage becomes altogether extinct among those who have made the greatest progress in the path of spiritual development. There is a tendency towards the establishment of equilibrium between the various forces of progress, material, intellectual and ethical; and society is characterised more by harmony than by mobility.”

Mr. Bose is careful to pointout that the animal necessities of life render a certain amount of struggle for material development inevitable. But the object of ethical and spiritual progress should be rather to minimise than to intensify it. The equipoised condition which is the characteristic of the third stage of civilisation is being constantly disturbed by various causes of which the animal tendencies of man are

the most important. As in every community, however civilised, there must be a numerical preponderance of men in the first or material stage of progress, a slight diminution of the defence exerted by the small class composed of the wise and the good results in their forming the upper hand and thus ensues....degeneration :

“How inexorable is the law of the three stages the governs the evolution of civilisation is well...in the case of western civilisation. The edulated experience and cultural acquisitions of civilisations have not enabled it to skip over or to abridge a single stage.”

Mr. Bose illustrates this law by taking bild's eye view of the different stages of thus important civilisations, *e.g.*, Egypt, Greco-Roman, Saracenic, Chinese, Indian and Modern or European.

According to Mr. Bose, Greece advanced to the third stage but did not make much progress in it. Of western civilisation of the present day, Mr. Bose speaks in no uncertain terms. In the highly expressive though somewhat exaggerated language of Carlyle, its prevalent characteristic is, ‘Cay I kill thee, or canst thou kill me’. The dominant occidental view of life is still of a gladiatorial character. That there is a large number of individuals in the West who have advanced to the third stage and are animated by the noblest altruistic ideal is unquestionable. But the wise and the good, who must be in a minority in every society, however civilised, have not yet acquired the dominant influence which they should have in a civilisation which has advanced to the third stage. There has been a considerable extension of the spirit of freedom, but its aim is to secure equality of opportunity in the struggle for animal existence. That man is an end in himself is fully recognised. But that end with the vast majority is the ignoble one of material satisfaction. Even philosophic scientists like Huxley ridiculed the quietism of the ancients and advised the European nations to play the man and “to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.” Mr. Bose gives a spirited rejoinder :

“It may be urged by an observer whose vision is not bedimmed by the glamour of western civilisation, that if the ancient sages counselled retirement from the strife stress of material advancement, so far as practicable, to those who were particularly desirous of spiritual progress, especially at an advanced age of

life, it was because the greater and the more arduous battle of such progress might be fought more energetically and more efficiently, because they held with Buddha that :

One may conquer a thousand-thousand men in battle. But he who conquers himself is the greatest victor.

The Western nations are 'playing the man', 'to strive to seek, to find'. But the question naturally obtrudes itself, to find what? A spectator from the Oriental point of view may well ask, "Of what avail is the victory of the western 'grown man', which is achieved not by love, mercy or self-sacrifice, but the path to which lies over the misery of countless fellow-creatures in all quarters of the globe, and which does not secure the tranquillity and beatitude begotten of righteousness and concord, but brings in Sisyphean misery and disquiet engendered by unsatisfied desire, insatiable greed, and perpetual discord?"

Charles Pearson, in his *National Life and Character*,—a book which created a great stir when it was first published—indulged in a forecast of European civilisation which is now wellknown. He said that by the industrial development of the Mongolian races, the white man would ultimately be driven from every neutral market and forced to confine himself within his own.

"Depression, hopelessness, a disregard for invention and improvement would replace the sanguinary confidence of races that are at present panting for new worlds to conquer," and "the world will be left without deep convictions and enthusiasm (which was also predicted by the historian Lecky as an inevitable result of the progress of civilisation) and the fervour of pious faith."

Another brilliant writer of Jewish origin, Max Nordau, has gone further than this English theoriser, and prophesied that as the tropical countries will grow cooler they will be overrun by the white man, will exterminate the Oriental nations (this was written before the Russo-Japanese war) and settle in tropical Asia, and the ancient civilisations of the East will thus become extinct. Mr. Bose also indulges in a prophesy about the future of European civilisation, but he is neither dogmatic nor pessimistic. He propounds the question—whether Western civilisation will share the fate of such material civilisations as those

of Rome, Assyria and Phoenicia, or will attain the equipoise and the harmonious development of the third stage. He does not, evidently, share with Max Nordau the fear of the doom of Oriental civilisation, which, according to him, has attained to a higher stage than that of the occidental nations, nor does he anticipate a gloomy future for them like Pearson. He agrees with the latter that the competition with China and Japan in the eastern markets,\* and the disputes between labour and capital, will bring about the decadence of European industrialism, but he thinks that it will prove to them a blessing in disguise. Industrialism is responsible for the colossal armaments of the West, extreme concentration of capital on the one hand and extreme poverty on the other, immense increase in the elaboration and complexity of the conditions of life and ceaseless rise of the standard of comforts and luxuries leading to perpetual enhancement of the intensity of the struggle for animal existence and to inordinate greed for wealth and the substitution of urban for a decidedly healthier rural condition of life on an enormous scale. Thrown back upon their resources, the people of Europe would have to depend more upon agriculture for livelihood than at present, and rural and agricultural life makes more for ethical development than urban and industrial. The expanding moral consciousness of the West is another circumstance which is favourable to a hopeful outlook. This is proved by the increase of benevolence, inventions for the alleviation of human suffering charitable gifts and endowments, by the humane treatment of criminals and animals the anti-slavery, anti-opium, anti-vivi-section and vegetarian movements, the Parliament of Religions, the Universal Races-Congress, the Hague arbitration tribunal, and Universal Races-Congress, the Hague arbitration tribunal, and similar gatherings and institutions. In the opinion of Mr. Bose, Western Civilisation is not likely to attain to the

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\* The following Reuter's telegram is going the round of the papers: Mr. Foster, Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce, in a speech reviewing his recent tour in the East said that the manufacturing developments of China and Japan have imported a problem into future productive power which would create some confusion in the great centres of the world. These people were to be reckoned with. The lesson with which he wished to impress Canada was the cultivation of neighbourly relations with all countries bordering on the Pacific." It is to be hoped that Indians will not miss the lesson which this short paragraph has for them.



third stage much before the close of the present century.

“When that consummation takes place, the evil tendencies of western industrialism would be repressed, but the foundation of international amity it has laid by bringing together all the races of the world would be strengthened, and there would arise, broad-based upon it, a fabric of civilisation grander and more majestic than any the world has witnessed as yet.”

But to us the most interesting chapter in Mr. Bose’s book—one which has the most practical bearing on our ideals and conduct—is the third, on the survival of civilisation. It begins by saying that

‘of all the civilisations which were developed during the first and second epochs only two have survived into the present epoch—the Chinese and the Indian:’

and the conclusions he arrives at the close of the chapter are as follow : *firstly*, civilisations in which the material element prevails over the ethical are of an ephemeral character; *secondly*, the survival of a civilisation depends upon its attainment of an equipoised condition between the cosmic forces making for material development, and the non-cosmic forces leading to higher culture, specially ethical culture; *thirdly*, the life of a civilisation after it has passed from one epoch to a later one depends upon the maintenance of this equipoise; *Fourthly*, it follows as a corollary from these conclusions that military, political and economical activities are of less significance in the life of a nation than high cultural activities. According to Mr. Bose, the longevity of the civilisations of India and China is due to certain factors. Benevolence formed the keynote to both Indian and Chinese ethics (it was not recognised by the Greek philosophers among the cardinal virtues). Wealth never formed the criterion of social rank. They both displayed a marvellous capacity for absorbing all foreign elements—Parthians, Seythians and Huns in the one case and Tartars, Mougols and Manchus in the other—into the substance of their stability. Both were free from the grip of militarism. Geographically, both the countries were isolated from the outside world. These were the circumstances which favoured the preservation of the integrity of their civilisation. But India differed from China in two important points. Indian thinkers were as markedly idealistic and other-worldly, as the Chinese were realistic and this-worldly. The other noteworthy point in which the

Hindus differed from the Chinese was their caste system. Though the caste system of the Hindus had served to maintain their isolation and thus to prolong their civilisation into the third stage, it was mainly owing to their idealistic temperament and the caste system, that they lost their political independence.

“The fighting caste, the Rajputs, fought and fought bravely against the Moslem aggressors. No disgrace ranked more in their breasts than the disgrace of a defeat in battle...The Rajputs resisted, and resisted with all their might, but they never secured the co-operation of the mass of the people, who considered the maintenance of government the business of the fighting caste with which they had no concern.’

Nevertheless,

The Hindus survived the loss of their political independence; and the survival is attributable to their moral and spiritual culture, which inspired them...sufficient courage to resist their conversion either by the sword or the allurements of material advancement. Hindu culture not only presented an impenetrable front of opposition to the disintegrating sciences of Mohammedan invasion, but also in the more of time captured the Moslem mind and largely advanced Moslem culture and Moslem administration.”

## II

If the causes of the survival of Hindu civilisation have been correctly summed up by Mr. Bose, the question arises—what is the duty of Hindus in the present conflict of civilisations on the historic soil of India? The leading exponents of extreme orthodoxy maintain that this question can be answered in one and one way alone. In their opinion, our attitude at the present juncture should be one of blind, absolute, unreasoning adherence to everything that goes by the name of Hinduism. The Hindu mind and Hindu society must be hermetically closed to all external and foreign influences. The time is not propitious to *eclecticism* and a discriminating freedom of choice. The forces that make for the disruption of Hindu society are strong, and any attempt to open its doors to the invasion of new ideas and methods is bound to end disastrously. Hinduism cannot, in the present political and social

condition of India, absorb these new elements and survive. We must therefore clip our wings, and do nothing but mark time. Call it Chauvinism, call it sitting on the fence, call it whatever you like, this is the only rational attitude for Hindus at the present moment. It is the attitude described in Matthew Arnold's wellknown lines :

The East bow'd low before the blast  
In patient, deep disdain;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.

When the present terrible strain on her civilisation is removed, when the blast will have blown off, then will be the time to think of reforms. Then we may spread our petals to the light once more, and drink in inspiration from all quarters of the globe. Hindus may then take up the thread of their destiny in their own hands, and their healthy natural instinct, fed from the perennial fountain of nationalism, will not err in finding out the path to salvation. Restored to its normal condition, Hindu society will then introduce radical changes if necessary to preserve the integrity of its culture and civilisation. But the time for it is not yet.

This being the theory propounded by the thinking section of orthodox Hindus, let us examine it a little in detail to see how far it is tenable. We shall take it for granted that the stability of Hindu civilisation, the preservation of the ancient Indian race-culture, is the object which all Hindus, whether orthodox or not, have in view.

The defects of Western civilisation, grave as they are admitted by all thinking men in the West. That spiritual supremacy is the real test of national efficiency is admitted by Benjamin Kidd, for instance, who says that

"the evolution which is slowly proceeding in human society is not primarily intellectual but religious in character. The evolution of society is maintained not by the intellect but by religion, which promotes the altruistic feelings. The possession of qualities contributing to social efficiency is therefore the one absolute test of racial superiority."

Guizot, lecturing in 1827, said that for the last fifteen centuries in Europe the life of the soul was laborious and stormy and that it was in

modern times only that the European mind had attained "a state, as yet very imperfect, but still a state in which reigned some peace, some harmony." Dr. Seignobos, writing in 1909 on contemporary civilisation, does not however seem to be very sanguine.

"Never" says he "has civilisation gathered about man so many [material] conditions for happiness. Are we happier than our ancestors? No one can affirm that. Happiness depends more on inward sentiment than on exterior advantages."

It is fact that old, old biblical query which confronts Europe : what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Robert Browning said the same thing when he wrote in the preface to his *Sordello* : "My stress lay on the development of the soul : little else is worth study." And it was Max Muller who said that the old Indian philosophers knew more about the soul than the Greek, mediaeval and modern philosophers.

On the evils of western industrialism Mr. Bose has dwelt at sufficient length. Herbert Spencer, on the eve of his long life, declaimed against what he called the rebarbarisation of Europe.

"In all places and in all ways", he said, "there has been going on for the past fifty years a recrudescence of barbaric ambitions, ideas and sentiments, and an increasing culture of blood-thirst"

Speaking of the mechanical inventions of Europe, Tolstoy says :

"To me all these acquisitions of so called civilisation seem to be the inventions of barbarism. They serve and pander to all that is basest in man. I fail to see that they confer on him any sort of moral superiority."

The evils of western democracy, the political spirit of the West, and socialism have been pointed out by many contemporary writers :

"Already the struggle in politics is largely a conscious sham, an ignoble farce, the parties pretending to hold different principles in order not to acknowledge that they have only different interests. Our whole political system is thus pervaded with dishonesty. What would in another sphere be regarded as lying a in politics deemed permissible, or even praiseworthy."

This is the verdict of Professor Flint. A community under the

dominance of the political spirit misses, according to Lord Morley, "the most bracing, widening and elevated of the whole range of influences that create great characters" "A disinterested love of truth can hardly coexist with a strong political spirit," says Lacky. In the eloquent language of the author of the *Letters of John Chinaman*, European polity

"is of the earth, earthy, while from heaven in above cries, like a ghost's the voice of the ....as clear, as ineffectual, as when first it, flung from the shores of Galilee its challenge to the world-sustains power of Rome".

Socialism had no doubt its origin in the miserable condition of the masses and the desire to ameliorate it, but in philosophy is the philosophy of comfortable human mobs, for it is frankly materialistic and assumes that man's chief end is a comfortable social life on earth. Its ideas is poor, superficial and inspiritual, and hence more apt to captive the lowed classes, in whom thought is in its infacts and the spirit is asleep. It attaches more importance to the worldly condition of man than to his character, and ignores the truth that man does not live by bread alone. Democracy has of course numerous excellences, but it has a tendency to keep culture at a low ebb. A low tone of morality and want of manners and dignity, are according to Crozier, among the characteristics of a democratic form of government. Lord Morley bitterly rails at what he calls "the plenary inspiration of Majorities".

The unsatisfactory character of western civilisation with its emphasis in materialism has turned the greatest minds of Europe towards spiritualism. Sir Oliver Lodge in his Presidential address to the British Association last month appended to the scientists to co-ordinate the science and establish some guiding and unity principle for all to study the unknown. He also reiterated his conviction that personality persisted after death. The lumacy living German thinker, Rudolph Europe is never tired of positing an independence spiritual life as the foundation of real human progress. In all western national he says, there is

"a limitless disintegration, a lamentable increase of conviction in all matters of principle, a helplessness on the face of the trivialities of our human lot, a helplessness in the midst of an over flowing outward minty."

He recognises in European history these different forms of culture—the artistic, the ethical and the dynamic, embodied in Hellenism, Christianity and Modern life, respectively. Detached from spiritual life, civilisation becomes partial and false, the ethical movement degenerates into a mere system of laws and formulas and favours narrowness and oppression, the artistic tendency leads to sensuality, indulgence and flippancy, and the dynamic to wildness egoism and brutality. The dynamic tendency of the modern age reveals itself in its impatience of the past and its eagerness for radical change.

It is indeed true that we have obtained a more varied and less rigid life : no authority or tradition within us, we are free to follow up each impression with all our might, to seize the instant, to accelerate developed of life. But in the midst of all this mobility and busy activity, life threatens to leave us on the mere unfew, and to become emptier in its spiritual character we lose our grasp of an inner unity of being, and with it our sole possible support against the get of phenomena; incapable of asserting our independence with regard to the latter, we are tossed sciplessly hither and thither. At the same time we are such with any real present, for this requires that should be at rest in itself, and involves an elevation have mere time. In its place we get a succession of and instants, whose ever-varying character converts into a restless flight and inevitably incliness us to and immediate effects, to gratify the senses, and rest outward advantages. As a necessary concessive we have a continual eager pursuit of the new, be dazzling the exacting, a seeking after sensation, dist....., pandering to the whims and moods of the crowd, the low average of humanity”.

The great historian Duneker referring to the tenacity of Hindu civilisation which bends but does not break, says:

“With this (tenacity, they (the Hindus) have retained a costly possession, that inclination towards the highest intellectual attainments which runs through their whole history. This treasure is still vigorous in the hearts of the best Indians, and appears the more certainly to promise a bright future.”

Even the ideals of western art are vitiated by the prevailing materialism of the West, and men like Mr. Havell are turning to India for artistic inspiration :

"The whole of modern European academic art-teaching has been based upon the unphilosophic theory that beauty is a quality which is inherent in certain aspects of matter or form quality first fully apprehended by the Greeks and afterwards rediscovered by the artists of the Italian Renaissance...Indian thought takes a much wider, a more profound and comprehensive view of Indian art...Beauty, says the Indian artist, is subjective, not objective. It is not inherent in form or matter : it belongs only to spirit, and can only be apprehended by spiritual vision...The true aim of the artist is not to extract beauty from nature, but to reveal the life within life, the noumenon within the phenomenon, the reality within the unreality, and the soul within matter—when that is revealed, beauty reveals itself. So all Nature is beautiful for us, if only we can realise the Divine Idea within it...To cultivate this faculty of spiritual vision, the powers of intuitive perception which, until recently, have been regarded in the West as beyond the scope of educational methods, was therefore the main endeavour of the Indian artist in the golden age of Indian art and literature." (*Ideals of Indian Art.*)

### III

We have now come at close quarters with the question we have set ourselves to answer. We shall presently see that the orthodox view finds support from passages in the writings of thoughtful and sympathetic observers, both Indian and foreign. "The task of Asia today," says Okakura in his *Ideals of the East*,

"becomes that of protecting and restoring Asiatic modes...No tree can be greater than the power that is in the seed. Life lies ever in the return to self...It was some small degree of this self-recognition that remade Japan and enabled her to weather the storm under which so much of the oriental world went down. And it must be a renewal of the same self-consciousness that shall build up Asia again into her ancient steadfastness and strength....*Victory from within, or a mighty death without.*"

"Surely it is something", says Sister Nivedita in *The web of Indian Life*.

"that in a country conquered for a thousand years the doorkeeper

of Viceroy's palace would feel his race too good to share a cup of water with the ruler of all-India. We do not easily measure the moral strength that is here involved, for the habit of guarding the treasure of his birth for an unborn posterity feeds a deep, undying faith in destiny in the Hindu heart. 'Today here, tomorrow gone,' says the most ignorant, *sotto voce*, as he looks at the foreigner, and the unspoken refrain of his thought is "I and mine abide for ever." Caste is race continuity; it is the historic sense : it is the dignity of tradition and of purpose for the future."

In the opinion of Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest living writer of Bengal.

"the race-conflict in India has been a conflict between widely dissimilar races whose difference of colour and ideals has been so serious that the shock has roused up all the conservative spirit of India. If India had taken (entirely to) the path of expansion, she would, under the circumstances, have run the risk of completely losing her individuality, and that was why society ever stood vigilantly on self-defence."

Let us now look a little into the present condition and needs of India, in order that we may be in a position to state what should be our attitude in regard to the future? We shall only touch upon the outstanding facts of the situation in the words of writers whose wellknown sympathy for Hindu culture and power of insight into Indian problems leave no room for misunderstanding. For we remember the wholesome warning of Babu Bipinchandra Pal against the educated Indian reformer, who, judging India in the light of the history and achievements of Europe.

"constantly condemns his own country and culture, and with the relentless pity of the missionary propagandist, seeks to ruthlessly improve them more or less after those alien ideals."

Max Muller considered it one of the saddest chapters in the history of the world that the Hindus should be "conquered for no fault of theirs, except that they had neglected the art of killing their neighbours."

"They themselves never wished for conquests," he adds, "they simply wished to be left alone and to be allowed to workout their



view of life, which was contemplative and joyful, though deficient in one point, namely, the art of self-defence and destruction."

Such was Max Muller's love for India that he hesitated to admit even a single defect in the Indian character.

"was it so very unnatural for the Hindus" he asks, "endowed as they were with a transcendent intellect, to look upon this life, not as an arena for gladiatorial strife and combat, or as a Market for cheating and huckstering, but as a resting place, a mere waiting-room at a station, no a journey leading them from the known to the unknown, but exciting for this very reason their utmost curiority as to whence they came and whither they were going?"

Okakura, who visited India and had personal knowledge of what she is today, says :

"We saw India, the holy land of our most sacred memories, losing her independence through her political apathy, lack of organisation, and the petty....of rival interests—a sad lesson, which made us keenly alive to the necessity of unity any cost."

Sister Nivedita, who writes with such thorough going sympathy of the caste system, concludes thus :

"And yet, if India is ever to regain national efficiency, this old device of the forefathers must be modified is the process—exactly how, the Indian people themselves can alone determine. For *India today has lost national efficiency. This fact there is no gainsaying.* Her needs now are not what they were yesterday...The country requires multiplied methods of self-expression, as the goal and summit of her national endeavour. She wants a greater flexibility, perhaps a readict power of self-adjustment than she ever had...Chief among her needs is a passionate drawing together amongst her people themselves."

Among the palpable evils of caste Sister Nivedita mentions the custom of excommunicating those who have crossed the seas. She speaks of 'the suicidal nature' of such an attitude, and points out that society has suffered many 'foolish and irritating' losses during the last fifty years as a result of this attitude. Even a pious and orthodox Hindu leader like Sir Gurudas Bannerji in his *Jnan O Karma* has approved

of foreign travel subject to certain limitations in detail. Babu Bepin Chandra Pal in his *Soul of India*, points out that

“the Hindu system of caste did not stand by itself. It was organically bound up with the law of the Asramas or stages of life. It is this Asrama-law that preserved the humanity of the Hindu in the face of the inequalities created by the system of caste. It was these special disciplines of the Asramas which as long as they were faithfully pursued by the so called higher castes, developed and ideal of spiritual democracy unknown to the rest of the world; and it may perhaps be reasonably held that the real cause of the disintegration of the mediaeval Hindu society was not to be found in the system of caste so much, if at all, as in the divorce between the Varnas and the Asramas, between the outer functions and inequalities of the caste-life, and the inner spiritual ideals and disciplines that were organically connected with them in the earlier periods of our history and culture.”

At the same time he condemns the educated Indian reactionary, who is unconsciously under the domination of the same alien ideals that have been consciously adopted by the reformer.

“In religion, the reactionary is setting up for the Indian scriptures the same claims to infallibility and absolutism that credal systems like Christianity or Islam popularly claim for the Bible or the Koran. He forgets that neither verbal infallibility nor any exclusive and absolute authority had ever been rested in the religious scriptures of Hinduism. In sociology, the reactionary tries to revive the relaxing rigidities of the Indian caste system in the spirit of the class-domination of Europe; and thereby he ignores the patent fact that the genius of the Indian caste system never tolerated the spirit of domination in the so called higher, and consequently, rarely evoked and spirit of envious revolt in the so called lower castes.”

What is the impression left in our minds by these extracts? All the writers here quoted, while giving ancient India full credit for all her great ideals, seem to feel the need of some adaptation of her age-worn culture to present ends some modification of her social customs to suit modern requirements, both in the interests of self-preservation and self-expression. For, as the poet says—

New occasions teach us new duties ;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth ;  
They must upward still and onward,  
Who would keep abreast of truth.

These writers also seem to agree that the rigidity of the caste system is somehow connected with our present degeneration, in spite of all its past excellences, and they lay stress on the necessity of evolving a unifying principle. Sir Herbert Risley has shown how the kings of Nepal within living memory and Ballal Sen and other independent kings of Bengal and Orissa changed the social precedence of the different castes according to the altered circumstances of the times. The supremacy of the Brahman is on the wane, as will appear from the sacred thread movement among the Keyasthas and other castes. This is noticed in the *Census of India*, Vol. v. (Bengal), 1911, where we find the following :

“Another modern tendency which calls for some notice is the active or passive neglect of the authority of the Brahmans as a final court of appeal in matters affecting the status of castes and their social practices, hitherto it has been the acknowledged privilege of the Brahman Pundits to interpret the *Shastras* and to declare whether any deviation from the orthodox rules may be allowed. Of late years, however, a number of castes have advanced new claims, or adopted new practices, if not in defiance of, at least without the function of the Brahmans.”

This is the result of not moving with the times. We have seen that according to Mr. Bose, the caste system, which helped in maintaining the isolation and integrity of Hinduism at an early stage, was itself responsible for the political subjugation of the Hindus at a later stage. Elsewhere Mr. Bose exposes the shallowness of the common selfish view of Brahmanical supremacy, but admits that it resulted in the loss of mobility and made Hindu civilisation unprogressive and unproductive beyond a certain stage.

“The Brahmins as a class did not seek material aggrandisement. Government, trade, in short, every occupation calculated to further material interests they left to the other classes. What they sought to restrict within the two highest classes, and specially within their own class, was spiritual and intellectual

advancement; and that is of a nature which does not usually excite the jealousy of the mass of the people. This monopoly was however all the more detrimental to intellectual progress beyond a certain stage, because it was of such non-material character that the lower classes would not consider it worth their while to contest it."

Even if we could all agree on the fundamental elements of Hinduism, the orthodox ideal is on the face of it impracticable, for it takes no count of the *Yuga-Dharma* or Time-Spirit. The Asrama-laws, for instance, cannot be revived in precisely the same form in which they used to exist, though their spirit may be adapted to modern conditions, and even the most orthodox cannot, if he wills close his ears, Ulysses-like, to the siren songs of western science. For good or for worse, the West is hammering at our doors, and it rests on us whether we are to admit the West under carefully-regulated restrictions, or compel it to take forcible possession of our minds. We cannot sit still and expect the surging tide to retire at our bidding. We must link the old with the new, reconcile the past with the present in order to build up the future. We must accommodate ourselves to the new situation created by the impact of the west on our traditional culture, and whether we are to sink or swim depends on the way in which we do it. It cannot be denied that our political subjection is favourable to the growth of intellectual stupor and moral stagnation, unless we consciously try to counteract its insidious influences. What the orthodox doctrinaire preaches is Fatalism, pure and simple; but the Hindu law of Karma does not mean sheer inaction. It is a Hindu poet who says that prosperity attends the man of energy and that the deer does not enter the mouth of the sleeping lion. The Hindu recognises both *Daiva*—the mysterious incalculable element in his destiny—as well as *Purushakara*—the regulative activity of man which produces definite, tangible results, and constitutes the other element which shaped his destiny. When the *Gita* advises us to work in a spirit of perfect detachment, and in scorn of consequence, it simply exhorts us to do our duty undeterred by the element of chance in our destiny, which may possibly withhold from us the full reward of our activities. The pessimistic advocate of the doctrine of total isolation forgets that this was not India's policy when she was great and glorious, when the temple of Borobudur in Java and of Omkar in Cambodia, the names

of cities in far away Mexico,\* and the ubiquitous stone images of Buddha spoke of her worldwide civilisation. Professor Radhakumud Mukherjee has shown that India then

“cultivated trade relations not only with the countries of Asia, but also with the whole of the then known world, including the countries under the dominion of the Roman empire, and both the East and the West became the theatre of Indian commercial activity and gave scope to her naval energy and throbbing international life.”

True, the orthodox Hindu may have no objection and may even look forward to a revival of this life after the present impact of the West is removed or withdrawn, but is it not hopeless to expect that the West will retire from India simply to allow Indian culture to shine forth once more in all its pristine glory? And what about the great Mohammedan community which has its home in India and in whose case even the vague possibility of withdrawal is unthinkable? To think that they will for ever continue to live side by side with the Hindus without influencing their civilisation in any way as they have themselves been influenced by it, is to show one's ignorance of the trend of social evolution. Already India is the meeting-ground of three important civilisations—the Hindu, the Moslem and the European or Modern. We cannot wipe out the present, and after the domination of the West comes to an end, revert to the stage where our cultural progress was arrested, and start anew from that point. We must weave the present into the warp and woof of our ancient culture, adapt it to our own needs, assimilate and absorb it as we have so often done in the past, *e.g.*, in the case of the Non-Aryans whom we brought within the pale of Hinduism under the name of Sudras, and thus, by a higher synthesis, carry the onward march of civilisation to a loftier stage of perfection. This is, and has always been our noble mission and we should not fail to respond now at the roll-call of duty. In the clash of civilisations, and their struggle for existence, adaptation is necessary for self-preservation. One of the noblest missionaries of the coming synthesis, Swami Vivekananda, was never tired of emphasising the fact that our present condition is one of *Tamas*, however, much we may mistake it for *Sattva*. The West is in the *Rajasic* stage, and we must

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\* *E.g.* Gautemala-Gautamalaya; Sacapuras—Sakyapura—From an article in *Harper's Magazine* by Dr. John Fryer.

pass through that stage before we can attain the stable equilibrium of the *sattvic* state. That way alone salvation lies, the other is the way to death. There can be no standing still, we must either advance or recede. The religion of the Hindus is called *Sanatan* or everlasting. But it can only be everlasting in the sense that its spirit, its essence, the truth at its core, is everlasting. The shell in which that truth is encased, that is to say, the outward forms, must change, as they have often changed in the past; for it is the law of all living things to change. Absence of change or growth means decay or death. Complete isolation is not only impossible, but even if it were possible, it would only hasten the extinction of that very culture which it is the object of the orthodox theorists to conserve. We have indeed no reason to be afraid of the generalisations of western science. For alone among the world-religions, the philosophical religions of India—the Samkhya, the Vedanta, and Buddhism—stand in no *a priori* contradiction to science and the developments of science. But one thing is essential—and this is the element of truth in the orthodox point of view, that which gives it whatever vitality it has—whatever the new form that the modern demand may impose on our civilisation, we must be true to ourselves, to the genius of our race and culture. “To remain true to herself, notwithstanding the new colour which the life of a modern nation forces her to assume, is,” in the opinion of Okakura, “the fundamental imperative” with Japan. Elsewhere he says:

“However the form may change, only at a great loss can Asia permit its spirit to die.”

#### IV

“And then, having renewed the sources of the world’s inspiration, we may be pardoned if we ask, what of India herself?” This is the question propounded by Sister Nivedita, and she answers it by pointing to the necessity of unification at all costs of the growth of a sentiment of nationality, as the solution of all our problems.

“The sacraments of a growing nationality would be in a new development of her old art, a new application of her old power of learnedness, new and dynamic religious interpretations, a new idealism in short, *true child of the nation’s own past*, with whom the young should throb and the old be reverent. The tests of its success would be the combining of renewed real and individual

vigour with a power of self-centralisation and self-expression hitherto unknown."

Nation-building should not be a difficult art with us, for as one of the most original of modern Indian scholars, Mr. Jayaswal, has shown in the columns of this magazine and elsewhere,

"the constitutional progress made by the Hindu has probably not been equalled, and much less surpassed, by any polity in antiquity."

But the guiding impulse must come from the West, for in spite of all the baneful tendencies of western civilisation of which we have spoken above at some length, we must agree with Professor C.F. Andrews, that the positive contribution of good which represents the great achievement of the West.

"finds its center in the ideal of freedom, often grossly misinterpreted and caricatured, but still a continuous and ever-growing possession....Its chief social expression may be seen in the development of the idea of nationality. Starting from small beginnings, this idea has now come to occupy the whole horizon of the West, so that political life can hardly be conceived in other than national terms....No one who has experienced the fuller and freer life of humanity under the new conditions would wish to be back to the old."

Mr. Jayaswal is a greater believer in the possibility of the evolution of Hindu civilisation along these lines. He says :

"The great privilege of the Hindu is that he is not a *said*....The golden age of his polity lies not in the past but in the Future. His modern history begins in the sixteenth century when Vaishnavism preached the equality of all men, when the Sudra—the helot of the ancient Hindu—preached shoulder to shoulder such the Brahmin who welcomed and encouraged it, when the God of the Hindu was for the first time worshipped with hymns composed by a Mohammedan. Then Ramdas declared that man is *free* and he cannot be objected by force, and when the Brahmin accepted the leadership of the Sudra in attempting to found a Indian state. The Reformation of the Hindu has them. But a force which is greater still is also coming. This is the pagan thought the European manhood. What a coincidence that the race which

evolved out the greatest constitutional principles in antiquity should be placed today in contact with the greatest constitutional polity of modern times? The contact is electrifying; it can either kill or rejuvenate the race. Probabilities are, however, as Duncker thought, for the latter, and a Hindu would naturally hope for the latter."

The best answer to the question we have set forth in this paper is however to be found in a passage of Rabindranath Tagore, which, long as it is, it is necessary to quote here. The whole article, containing as it does a masterly analysis of the main currents of Indian history, deserves to be studied in this connection. It will be seen that like all those who have thought deeply on the subject, he takes a bright view of India's ability to cope with the present situation, and is full of a robust confidence, based on a careful study of her past, in the future of our race. Speaking of the latest stage of Hindu civilisation, that which followed the victory of Brahmanism over Buddhism, he says :

"The age of extreme self-contraction naturally followed the age of the freest self-expansion in our history...A society thus circumstanced cannot keep its balance. When the path of self-expansion is closed altogether, and the conservative spirit is weaving newer and newer meshes round itself in a mood of self-contraction—the genius of the race cannot develop itself. Such social chains cannot build up a body, they can only keep a mechanical religion alive generation after generation, and destroy the vital religion. Such a race becomes unfit for leadership in thought and action, and prepares itself in every way for political slavery.

"Once before, at the dawn of Aryan history, the heart of our society had freed itself from the obstruction of the Many and the Foreign by seeking out the path of oneness through them all."

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\* Earlier in the same article, we have the following "One day the Kshatriyas alone perceived that amidst all seeming differences the externally true was one and one alone. Thus Knowledge of God (Brahm-Vidya) was peculiarly a Kshatriya science; it denounced the Vedic lore as minor theology and sought to reject as futile the oblations, sacrifices and other rituals carefully preserved by the Brahmins. This clearly proves that the new spirit had clashed with the old in that age...Brahm-Vidya is called Raj-Vidya or the lore of the kingly caste."



Today another such epoch has arrived for us. Today the foreign element is more extensive and more alien to our national genius; it has weighed down the mind of our race. And yet the sole dominant power in our society for long ages now has been conservatism. It has preserved everything that exists—even ruins have not been swept away, the drift weed of foreign seas has been carefully preserved by it! It is bound to impede the march of the national life at every step; it is bound to narrow human thought and restrict human action. Therefore, to rescue ourselves from such misery, we require today above all things that mental power which will liberate the simple from the complex, the essential from the external, the one from the diverse. And yet our society has loaded with a thousand chains this very free and expansive power of man!

“Still, the race’s heart has not been altogether crushed out by its chains. The Middle Ages in Indian history afford many examples of how our society’s instinct of self-expansion has occasionally fought against the stupor of extreme self-contraction. Nanak, Kabir, and other religious leaders have given concrete shape to this struggle of the imprisoned spirit...In the Middle Ages, such teachers have arisen in our midst again and again,—their aim has been to lighten our load. They have tried to wake the true India by knocking at the closed door of popular practice, religious convention, and customary usage.

“That age has not yet ended; that spirit is still working. None can resist it. The history of India shows that from very ancient times her mind has ever fought against inertia. India’s richest treasures, her Upanishads, her Geeta, her religion of universal love, Buddhism, are all the spoils of victory won in this great war...The true inner nature of India is sure to save us from the terrible load of these futile ceremonies and beliefs...

“Not to fight against the accumulated rubbish of ages, to let matters drift, is to court death. The strength of a race is limited. If we nourish the ignoble, we are bound to starve the noble....Never, not even in her darkest day of misery, has India entirely given herself up to this stupor...We cannot, indeed, perceive clearly from the outside the aspect of the age in which we live; but we feel that India is eager to get back her truth, her

One, her Harmony. The stream of her life had been dammed up ages ago; its waters had become stagnant; but today the dam has been breached somewhere; we feel that our still waters have again become connected with the mighty ocean; the tides of the free wide universe have begun to make themselves felt in our midst. We see today that all our newly awakened energy is now rushing towards the universe, now rushing inwards to our own selves—like the blood-currents propelled by a living heart. At one impulse cosmopolitanism is leading us out of home: at the next, the sense of nationality is bringing us back to our own community. On the one hand universality is tempting us to abandon our racial individuality—on the other, we are realising that if we lose our national distinctness, we shall lose universality at the same time. These are the true signs of the commencement of life's operations within our old inert society. Thus placed between two contending forces, we shall mark out the middle path of truth in our national life; we shall realise that only through the development of racial individuality can we truly attain to universality, and only in the light of the spirit of universality can we perfect our individuality; we shall know of a verity that it is idle mendicancy to discard our own and beg for the foreign, and at the same time we shall feel that it is the extreme adjectness of poverty to dwarf ourselves by rejecting the foreign.”

## V

We have now brought the discussion to a close, but we are not sure of the reception which these views will meet with at the hands of the orthodox advocate of exclusion. For the authorities here quoted are modern authorities, and orthodoxy is saturated with reverence for the past, and is loth to recognise soundness in contemporary thought. The golden age of extreme conservatives lies in a dim antiquity, whose very obscurity inspires them with a sense of profound awe and mystery. Modern prophets, because they are modern, fail to impress them with the sanctity of their ancient prototypes, and the farthing rushlight of a primæval age appears to them more illuminating than the most brilliant of modern incandescent burners. Clear reasoning and commonsense are discounted as shallow, trivial statements are magnified into

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\* Translated by Professor Jadunath Sarkar.

profound maxims by esoteric arguments. The assumption is invariably made in the case of an ancient commonplace, that more is meant than meets the ear, whereas, modern utterances do not even get a fair hearing. Some of the men whom they call great and whose authority they respect, the moderns do not set more store by than Duns Scotus or Thomas Aquinas. Rabindranath Tagore in his *Achalayatan* has admirably hit off the absolute barrenness of some of their favourite intellectual exercises, which often kinge on meaningless formulated or trivial points of ritual. When the spirit of enquiry is dead, and the intellect is reduced to bank-ruptcy by indulgency in useless subtleties, the mind is apt to lose its grasp on facts and original thinking as well as creative activity become extinct. Buckle, writing so long ago as the first half of the last century, pointed out some of the evil results of an excessive reverence for antiquity and of an inordinate tenacity of old opinions, old beliefs and old habits which distinguished Spain from the rest of Europe.

“By encouraging the nation that all the truth, most important to know were already known, they repress those aspirations, and dull that generous confidence in the future, without which nothing really great can be achieved. A people who regard the Pak with too wistful an eye, will never bestir themselves to help the onward progress; they will hardly believes that progress is possible. To them antiquity of synonymous with wisdom and every improvement to a dangerous innovation...Believing that the knowledge they have inherited is far greater than any that they can obtain, they wish to preserve their intellectual possessions whole and unimpaired; inasmuch as they least alteration in them might impair their value. Europe is ringing with the noise of intellectual achievements. Spain sleeps on, untroubled, unheeds impassive, receiving no impressions from the rest of the world, and making no impressions upon it. There she lies, at the further extremity of the continent, a hage and torpid mass, the sole representative now remaining of the feelings and knowledge of the middle ages. And what is the worst symptom of all, she is satisfied with her own condition. Though she is the most backward country of Europe, she believes herself to be the foremost. She is proud of everything of which she should be ashamed.”

In the opinion of Dr. P.C. Ray, the author of the *History of Hindu Chemistry*, the decline of the spirit of enquiry in India inaugurated a period of intellectual stagnation which rendered her morally unfit for the birth of a Boyle, a Descartes, a Newton. But the researches of some Bengali scholars, and the recent princely gifts of Sir Tarakanath Palit and Dr. Ghose for the endowment of a College of Science have again filled him with hope for the future, and in his address delivered last month at the Calcutta Chemical Club, he was able to say :

“We hope we have slept off the torpor of ages and that it will be ours once more to extend the bounds of knowledge.”

The absence of the historic sense—that special contribution of the Modern Spirit to the method of rational investigation, is responsible for much of what must appear to be the perversity of the extremist point of view. To seek light from the Shastras in regard to the controversial social topics of today has its uses in that it gives us a correct historical outlook, and enables us to approach these questions in the proper spirit, but it is often no more fruitful than ploughing the sands, for the scriptures are various and the opinions they record are manifold and often even contradictory. The very fact that divergent opinions are to be found in the different Shastras, which are all regarded as equally authoritative, shows that independent thinking was not only tolerated but encouraged in the palmy days of Hindu civilisation. When Hindu society was a living organism, it was not afraid of introducing reforms, for even when the age of original banking came to an end and that of commentators began, social rules grew ‘from precedent to precedent’ and scriptural exicious was not confined to an elucidation of, that was often an improvement upon, various texts. The mediaeval interpreter should often read his own meaning into an texts, and justify his departure from the practice hitherto sanctioned by reference to the still more ancient text; and by disclaiming, like Jimutavahan of pious memory all heretical views as monstrous and un-Hindu, he would protect his innovation from the blight of reactionary influences. In this way Hindu society has always maintained an equilibrium between the forces of contraction and expansion. They were the real lovers of the *dharma* who dared to introduce reforms in accordance with the progressive ideas of the times. The Modern—shall we say, degenerate?—successors of the authors of the Samhitas do not possess their splendid moral courage, and follow the letter of the law that

killeth, but not the spirit that giveth life.\* While the student of social evolution knows that we have inherited a noble culture, and that the tradition of many centuries should not be lightly disturbed, he also knows that the Past can never be revived in precisely the same form, and that the Future is bound to be coloured by the Present. Indifferentism and exclusiveness can only lead to decay and destruction, but never to our regeneration. We need not apprehend that new wine of western civilisation will prove too strong for the old bottle of our Hindu culture. The shyness and suspicion which proceed from weakness and ignorance must now be given up, for with increasing knowledge has come self-confidence, without which nothing great can be achieved. The desire to keep the West at arm's length might have been justifiable when we were too ignorant to discriminate, and there was a risk of being thrown off our balance by the force of the contact. We now understand that 'protection through imitation' is not only a law of biology but also of sociology. We must learn to fight the West with the weapons of European science and European industry. While retaining the essentially spiritual character of our civilisation, we must learn the secrets which have enabled Europe to banish plague, famine and malaria. It is necessary that we should attain a certain stage of economic efficiency before we are in a position to cultivate the things of the spirit—we cannot very well do so with millions of our countrymen dying of preventable diseases, the outcome of poverty and ignorance. What the immortal Kalidas said of his drama is equally true of social customs and practices : "Everything that is old is not good, nor is a drama bad because it is new. The wise find out the best by examining both the old and the new, the fool allows his judgement to be overruled

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\* See Guruprasad Sen, *Introduction to the Study of Hinduism*. Professor Joseph Kohler of the Berlin University in a recent article on the Mimamsa Rules of Interpretation of Jaimini, observes that they were highly efficient in guaranteeing the fitness and the progressiveness of law, "When it was wished" says the learned professor "to rescind some old law, this could not be done openly and directly. Progress had to be secured in indirect ways by an extensive application of the principle of analogy and by resorting to the doctrine of the rational method. Whenever, any old law had become impracticable, an effort was made to undermine it and to that end one acted upon the bright idea that when the reason had ceased, the law must also be done away with. A wellknown example of this method of treatment is found in the case of the "Niyog" institution."

by what others think?" The time is now come when we must have the courage to prove all things, so that we may hold fast that which is good. We should proceed cautiously with due regard to our per traditions, and avoiding hasty zeal, has proceed we must. The age of blind imitation and consequent denationalisation is gone. We have learnt where western civilisation is defective, wherein it exceed and wherein it is backward in comparison with our own. The national consciousness of the race has been fully awakened, and we all recognise that our future progress must be evolved on the lines of our own past, and possess characteristics distinctive of our civilisation and race. 'Victory from within, or a mighty death without,' must still be our motto. But that victory has only be achieved by competition with and not by ignoring or fighting shy of the modern European civilisation which is pressing us on all sides.

*(A Bengali Brahman)*

## **SURVIVAL OF HINDU CIVILIZATION**

### **I**

The learned "Bengali Brahman" who has done me the honour of reviewing my "Epochs of Civilization" in the last November issue of the "Modern Review" has raised an important question, perhaps the most important which should engage our attention at the present day—how can the individuality of our civilization be maintained? I have only incidentally touched this subject in my work, as I thought its importance and complexity demanded detailed discussion and treatment in a separate work.

As the thoughtful reviewer has pointed out, one of the generalizations reached in my work is, that the life of a civilization after it has passed from one epoch to a later one depends upon the maintenance of the equilibrium attained in the third stage between the cosmic forces making for material progress and the non-cosmic forces leading to higher culture (especially ethical culture).

This equilibrium, it should be explained, is a moving or dynamic one. It is constantly disturbed by various causes, internal as well as external. The continuance of the life of a civilization after it has attained the equipoise of the third stage would depend upon the restoration of

the equilibrium after such disturbance though not in the same position as before. For instance, the equilibrium of our civilization has recently been seriously disturbed by the virtual extinction of our manufacturing industries. Industrially, as in various other respects, ours was a very well-ordered community. Our weavers used to take care of our cotton industry, as the *Muchis* and *Chamars* did of tanning, the cultivation of sugar; and so on. But our hand-made manufactures can no longer compete successfully with the machine made articles imported from abroad. As the restoration of the harmony of our civilization, so far as it depends upon manufacturing industries, cannot well be effected except by their resuscitation, at least partly, on western methods, it would mean considerable dislocation of the existing organisation of industrial guilds or castes. Again, the village-community system was the most important feature of our political organisation. It was through that system that the people managed their own affairs and governed themselves. They enjoyed real self-government, and were never seriously affected by governmental or dynastic changes. Now that the village-community system has become practically effected through centralization of government, the institution of government schools, law courts, &c., it would probably be impossible to revive it, at least in all its entirety.

As I have shown in my "Epochs of Civilization," Hindu Civilization stepped into the highest or the third stage about 500 B.C. and continued in it till about 700 A.D. It attained a state of harmonious development during that period. There is a natural tendency in all civilizations towards excessive materialism and all that it connotes—greed, strife, discord, military and predatory propensities, inordinate inequality in the distribution of wealth, causing demoralising luxury among a small section of the community, and equally demoralising poverty among the proletariat, &c. In the case of Hindu civilization this tendency was effectually restrained by the dominant influence of lofty ethical and spiritual ideals—the loftiest as yet attained by civilized man—which set self lessness and benevolence towards all sentient beings above all other virtues, and regarded the animal life of man as a bondage of the spirit liberation from which is man's highest salvation.

The integrity of our civilization, as that of the Chinese—the only two civilizations which have survived the last epoch—has hitherto been preserved by the maintenance of the equilibrium referred to above. The

movements of these civilizations, since their attainment of the third stage, have been restricted to the restoration of the equilibrium whenever disturbed by any causes either from within or from without.

"The *role* of the great men of China ever since she reached the third stage in the first epoch has been not to strike out new paths but to bring back their community to the equipoised condition reached during that stage. Confucius always professed to be a transmitter.\* He trod in the footsteps of the great and good Yaou, Shun and others who had adorned the third stage of the Chinese civilization during the first epoch (about B.C. 2356-2000). The mantle of Confucius fell on Mencius who sought only to perpetuate the doctrines of his great master. Chinese ideals of life have not appreciably varied ever since the days of Yaou and Shun. Similarly in India her great men since the close of the third stage of her civilization from Sankaracharya and Ramanuja down to Rammohan Roy and Dayananda Sarasvati have had no new message to deliver. Their function has been only to bring back the people to the old paths of ethical and spiritual development when they had strayed far from them".

Such development being the most precious heritage from the third stage and the most important factor in the survival of a civilization, their attention has always been mainly directed towards its maintenance, all other activities being subordinated to it. The literary activity of India and the development of her vernacular literatures during the present epoch are mainly attributable to the moral and religious movements initiated or developed by Chaitanya, Kabir and other reformers. Even the impulse for the most pronounced expression of political activity in modern India—that among the Sikhs and the Mahrattas—came from socio-religious reformation.

If the experience of the past is a safe guide for the future—we have, at least, no safer guide—then we may not unreasonably conclude, that the survival of Hindu civilization in the future will depend upon the maintenance of its equipoised condition. We have, therefore, to inquire how that condition has been affected to late by the western contact and otherwise, in what respects favourably and in what respects unfavourably, and how the favourable influences could be strengthened

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\* "Epoch of Civilization", p. 83.



and the adverse ones eliminated or minimised. Our course of action would have to be shaped according to the result of this investigation.

There is not likely to be any divergence of opinion in regard to this proposition. The conservative as well as the radical among the Neo-Hindus (Western educated Hindus), if they are at all reasonable, should agree in it. The extreme conservative position so pithily expressed by the quoted lines of the poet—

“The East bowed low before the blast,  
She let the legions thunder past,  
Then plunged in thought again.”

is untenable. And the reason is obvious: the “blast” is not a casual visitation, and the “legions” are not in a hurry to “thunder past,” and have but little consideration for the introspective proclivity of the East. The situation of the extreme radicals is equally indefensible, because even if it were possible for them to join the “legions” and make common cause with them, the “legions” would not have them. Comparing civilization to an organism, the continuance of its life when placed in a new environment would obviously depend upon its recuperative capacity, its ability to assimilate what is good for it and to reject what is not?

The difficulty of the problem before us arises when we come to consider what would be beneficial and what would be detrimental. The multitudinous and involved character of sociological phenomena renders the task of analysing them an extremely arduous one. There is hardly any institution which is altogether good or altogether bad; and the good and the bad are so intimately intermingled that it is sometimes impossible to separate and weigh them in order to find out which way the scale turns. There is, for instance, a great deal to be urged in favour of, as well as against a republican form of government, and it is extremely difficult to form an opinion as to whether, on the whole, it is preferable to limited monarchy.

The idea which people ordinarily form of a sociological product is like that of the elephant formed by four blind men. One touched the leg of an elephant, and said, ‘The elephant is like a pillar.’ The second touched the trunk and said, ‘The elephant is like a thick stick or club.’ The third touched the belly and said, ‘The elephant is like a big jar.’ The fourth touched the ears, and said ‘The elephant is like a winnowing

basket.' The conception of a part being taken for that of the whole, a sociological phenomenon is judged to be beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature of the part on which the judgement is based. There is, for example, a strong body of cultured men in England who look upon vaccination as an evil, and facts and figures are ably put forward by them in support of their opinion. In the present age of wonderful scientific progress, no science has probably done more to promote the happiness of man and mitigate his sufferings than medical science. Yet there is a large number of highly educated men and women especially in America who hold that science to be absolutely worthless. The judgements in these cases are undoubtedly based upon facts, but they are facts which form only a part of the phenomena observed.

Again, just as the same seed would germinate into plants yielding delicious fruits at one place and sour ones at another, so the same social agency may be beneficent in one country, and may not be quite beneficent, or may even be the reverse of it, in another. In England, for example, no one would dispute the immense good which has been done by the railway. In India, however, the boon conferred by it is of a questionable character. While it has annihilated distance and brought the different parts of the country within easy reach, it has by facilitating the transport of machine-made foreign merchandise killed indigenous manual industries; by taking showy, shoddy apparel and brummagem inutilities to the doors of the mass of the people has seduced them to sacrifice substance to shadow, and has served to intensify their poverty and increase their misery, whatever, show of prosperity they may make by their fineries; and has by obstructing the natural courses of drainage proved a potent factor in the propagation of fever.

Further, just as one may have to wait a long time for the fruit of the tree from the seed sown today and just as the tree may wither away before bearing any fruit at all, or it may yield good fruit at first, but bad ones later on, so the results of sociological agencies sometimes take a long-time to develop, if they develop at all and not unoften they may be conducive to progress in the beginning, but may prove prejudicial to it afterwards. Many examples illustrative of these statements will, no doubt, occur to the observant reader. The caste system of India by incorporating the non-Aryans within the Aryan community, by placing a high ideal of culture before the Brahmans and by promoting co-operation and minimising the evil effects of the struggle for animal

existence undoubtedly helped progress in its earlier stages. But various causes combined to make it so rigid later on that it could no longer respond to environmental changes, and became more an impediment than a help to social harmony; and for several centuries our reformers have been doing their best to release the people from its adamant grip. Christianity is one of the most ethical religions of the world. Yet, it is a fact that the aborigines who have been converted to Christianity not unoften compare unfavourable in respect of morality with their heathen compatriots, who are, as a rule, far more honest, truthful; and straightforward.

A perfectly, detached, impartial attitude in sociological interpretations is well nigh impossible. Our judgement is liable to be warped by bias conscious as well as unconscious. In the present conflict of civilizations of India, this bias may be in favour of either Indian or Western views, ideals, practices and institutions according to the training, the temperament and the environment of the observer. The extreme pro-Indian bias is reflected in such works as, for instance, those of the Arya Samaj, which taking the Samhita portion of the Vedas to be revealed attempt to trace all religions and all science to them. But such prepossessions are comparatively rare. The pro-Western bias, on the contrary, though it is not so strong now as in the nearly days of English education, is still much stronger than the pro-Indian. This is attributable to two causes. In the first place, we are dazzled and our vision is bedimmed by the glamour of the magnificent material and scientific achievements of the West. There is nothing which ordinary people worship more than mundane power and prosperity, whether in individuals or communities, and the most puissant and apparently prosperous nations of the present day belong to the West. Not a few of us are prone to reason that if they adopted the habits, customs, and institutions of the occidental they too would be powerful and prosperous as they imagine like him. Secondly, our education being almost entirely on Western lines, we have alongwith it imbibed Western ideas and views which, perhaps often unconsciously, affect and colour our judgements.

For instance, as has been pointed out by the learned "Bengali Brahman,"

"One of the noblest missionaries of the coming synthesis, Swami Vivekananda was never tired of emphasizing the fact, that our

present condition is one of *Tamas* however, much we may mistake it for *Sattva*. The West is in the *Rajasik* stage, and we must pass through that stage, before we can attain the stable equilibrium of the *Sattvic* stage. That way alone salvation lies, the other is the way to death.”\*

This is the occidental view, and it is rather surprising, that Vivekananda, who might not unreasonably be expected to be well acquainted with the relation between the Indian and the Western civilizations, should have been so largely influenced by it. The *tamasa* stage roughly corresponds to the first stage as defined by me in my “Epochs of Civilization,” as the *Rajasa* does to the second, and the *Sattvik* to the third. In every community, however civilized, there are people of these three stages, those belonging to the lowest being numerically preponderant. A nation may be said to have attained the third or *Sattvik* stage when the people of that stage, always the smallest class, influence the ideals and activities of those belonging to the other stages. Judged by this standard our forefathers reached the highest stage of civilization during the last epoch. As the attainment of the harmonious and equipoised condition of that stage necessarily involves loss of mobility to a great extent, Hindu civilization has since then been exuberantly encrusted with thick parasitic outgrowths of ignorance and superstition, the products of stagnation. And there are many people who mistake the exterior encrustation for the interior real thing. The function of our great men has always been to remove the adventitious excrescences and expose the underlying genuine substance to the blurred vision of such misguided people. That there is still, and there will always be much “spade-work” to do in this way is unquestionable. But, it would nevertheless, be a travesty of history to say with the Western writers that our civilization is extinct and that we have lapsed into the *tamasa* stage. Any one who has mixed with our people especially away from large cities would, I think, agree with me when I say, that they are still to a large extent pervaded by the Hindu ideals of self-abnegation and benevolence, and that there is still much less of animality in them than in the corresponding classes in the West. The number of criminals, especially of female criminals, bears a much smaller proportion to the total population in India than in the highly civilized countries of the West. I was touring in the Central Provinces

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\* The *Modern Review* November. 1913, p. 142.

during the great famine of 1898, and was greatly struck by the patient resignation with which they bore the dire calamity and the benevolent spirit in which they helped one another. There were no riots, no increase in crimes to speak of. There is more poverty here than in the West, and more ignorance judged by the standard of literacy, but there is much less of squalor and brutality, much less of degradation and misery. Our community still produces men of the *Sattvik* type, though their number is much smaller than before and they still exert considerable influence upon the other classes. They rarely, if ever, appear in newspapers; what they do is done in silence and secrecy. While touring in the Rewah State in the nineties of the last century. I was surprised to find that the Gonds of an extensive tract in that state, who like most other aboriginal tribes are generally addicted to intoxicating drinks, had given up drinking; and on inquiry, I found out the reason to be the fiat of a *Yogi* who had visited the State sometime before me.

“His order had gone forth from village to village, and the Gonds without question had become total abstainers. No crusade against intemperance could have produced such a wonderful and widespread result. There are no doubt charlatans among the *Yogis* who live upon the credulity of ignorant people. But there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, that there are also genuine men among them, men who devote their lives to spiritual culture in a manner inconceivable to the European.”

\* “A History of Hindu Civilization during British Rule.” Vol. I, p. xii.

(P.N. Bose)

## II

As I am writing this, I have before me a report of a recent discussion at a meeting, held on October 4, 1913, of the Senate of the Bombay University which will illustrate how our judgement is liable to be perverted by the pro-Western bias. The discussion arose out of the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Education Department, to the Registrar of the University :

“I am directed to state that at the conference of Orientalists held at Shimla in July, 1911, there was a general concensus of opinion that it was necessary while making provision for Oriental study

and research on modern critical line, to maintain side by side with it the ancient and indigenous systems of instruction, since the world to studentship would, it was thought, suffer irreparable loss if the old type of Pandit and Maulavi were to die out, and that what was needed to promote this indigenous system was encouragement rather than reform? With this object in view it has been suggested that a Sanskrit school might be established at Poona for the training of Pandits. The school should be furnished with a good library to which the collection of manuscripts at the Deccan College might be transferred. The students at the proposed school would be partly pandits engaged in the acquisition of Oriental learning on the traditional lines, and partly graduates interested either in Oriental research or in extending their knowledge of the more recondite branches of Oriental studies. The staff would consist partly of the repositories of the ancient traditional learning and partly of modern Oriental scholars. Provision would also be made for the imparting of an elementary knowledge of the English language to the Pandit students, and of the German and French languages, a knowledge of which is necessary for the study of modern methods of criticism, the graduate branch of Oriental studies of the University, and that its alumni might be granted University titles and degrees for Sanskrit learning similar to those now granted by the Madras University."

In connection with this letter Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar proposed,

"That Government be informed that the University is prepared to establish a branch of Oriental studies with suitable titles of distinction if arrangements are made for the teaching of this branch of knowledge generally on the lines indicated in the Government letter."

This proposal met with a storm of opposition which was led by Principal R.P. Paranjpye. So far as I can gather, his reasons for opposing it are—

First. The traditional mode of learning developed the faculty of "cramming."

Secondly. It was adverse to "liberal education."

"The old traditional learning" said Mr. Paranjpye,

"would not stand the test of modern ideas. They should leave the Pandits to take care of themselves. If government desired to give them encouragement let them do so, but the University should have nothing to do with them. He did not want traditional learning at the expense of liberal culture."

Mr. K. Natrajan in seconding the amendment proposed by Mr. Paranjpye said, that

"he was surprised that at that time of the day they should talk of the preservation of the pandits. Considering the harmful mode of their learning it was not advisable for the university to recognise them by institutionary degrees. The university should not extend its recognition to anyone who had not acquired an insight into what he called the modern outlook of life? The pandits' outlook of life was so narrow, and the traditional school of learning was so harmful and opposed to modern learning, that by encouraging it they would not be encouraging what was termed liberal education?"

Poor pandits! The fact that such men as Sankaracharya, Bhaskaracharya, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Isvara Chandra Vidyasagara, and Dayananda Sarasvati have come from their ranks in comparatively recent times—not to speak of the great philosophers and scientists who flourished during the day of our civilization—should have afforded food for reflection to men who have any pretension to "liberal" education. That there are serious defects in the indigenous system of higher education would be readily admitted by all who know anything about it. But it is not so harmful nor does it compare so very unfavourably with the system of English education in vogue among us, as to be undeserving of the small measure of encouragement vouchsafed by government. There is I think, more of 'cramming' among us than among the pandits. They exercise their memory to be thorough, we do so merely to pass examinations. Thoroughness and profundity are writ large on the brow of the pandits, as superficiality and shallowness on ours. Then, in regard to the matter "crammed," I am not sure that we can reasonably boast of superior discriminative capacity, when we remember that a good portion of our time has been consumed in committing to memory such things as the feats (with dates) of glorified

assassins, murderers, freebooters, and swindlers.

A tree is to be judged by its fruit; and I have grave doubts if the fruit of the exotic recently planted is so markedly superior to that of the indigenous plant that we can despise it and leave it to Perish. The pandit is the embodiment of a high cultural ideal which actuates but few of us. He is but little influenced by commercial consideration. He not only imparts education without any fee but also feeds his pupils; and though *Brahmacharya* has undergone considerable relaxation of late the physical and mental discipline they are still subjected to is far more wholesome than what is enforced in our English schools?

Physically, intellectually, and morally the average pandit does not compare at all unfavourably with the average product of English education. I doubt if the pandits as a body are more narrowminded and illiberal than such stickler for "liberal culture" as Messrs. Paranjpye and Natarajan. Lest I should be charged with bias in favour of the pandits, I shall cite the testimony of some Western scholars. "The Brahmins who compiled," says H.H. Wilson, "a code of Hindu law, by command of Warren Hastings preface their performance by offering the equal merit of every form of religious worship.

Contraries of belief, and diversities of religion, they say, are in fact part of the scheme of Providence; for as a painter gives beauty to a picture by a variety of colours, or as a gardener embellishes his garden with flowers of every hue, so God appointed to every tribe its own faith, and every sect its own religion, that man might glorify him in diverse modes, all having the same end, and being equally acceptable in his sight. To the same effect it is stated by Dr. Mill in his preface to the *Khrista Sangita*, or *Sacred History of Christ*, in Sanskrit verse, that he had witnessed the eager reception of the work by devotees from every part of India, even in the temple of Kali, near Calcutta, and that it was read and chanted by them with a full knowledge of its anti-idolatrous tendency."

It would be difficult to find such catholicity and philosophic toleration even now in many parts of the civilized West.

MaxMuller thus writes :

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\* *Essays and Lectures on the Religion of the Hindus* Vol. II. p. 82.



“During the last twenty years, however, I have had some excellent opportunities of watching a number of native scholars under circumstances where it is not difficult to detect a man’s true character, I mean in literary work and, more particularly, in literary controversy I have watched them carrying on such controversies both among themselves and with certain European scholars, and feel bound to say that, with hardly one exception, they have displayed a far greater respect for truth, and a far more manly and generous spirit than we are accustomed to even in Europe and America, They have shown strength, but no rudeness; nay I know that nothing has surprised them so much as the coarse invective to which certain Sanskrit scholars have condescended, rudeness of speech being, according to their view of human nature, a safe sign not only of bad breeding, but of want of knowledge. When they were wrong, they have readily admitted their mistakes; when they were right, they have never sneered at their European adversaries. There have been, with few exception, no quibbling, no special pleading, no untruthfulness on their part, and certainly none of that low cunning of the scholar who writes down and publishes what he knows perfectly well to be false, and snaps his fingers at those who still value truth and self-respect more highly than victory or applause at any price. Here, too, we might possibly gain by the import cargo. Let me add that I have been repeatedly told by English merchants that commercial integrity stands higher in India than in any other country, and that a dishonoured bill is hardly known there.”

Mr. Adam gives the following interesting description of the Pandits (quoted in F.W. Thomas’ “History and Prospects of British Education in India,” p. 8) :

“I saw men not only unpretending, but plain and simple in their manners, and though seldom, if ever, offensively coarse, yet reminding me of the very humblest classes of English and Scottish peasantry; living constantly half-naked and realising in this respect the descriptions of savage life; inhabiting huts which, if we connect moral consequences with physical causes, might be supposed to have the effect of stunting the growth of their minds, or in which only the most contracted minds might be

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\* “India : what can it teach us.” Lecture II

supposed to have room to dwell and yet several of these men are adepts in the subtleties of the profoundest grammar of what is probably the most philosophical language in existence; not only practically skilled in the niceties of its usage, but also in the principles of its structure; familiar with all the varieties and applications of their national laws and literature and indulging in the abstrusest and most interesting disquisitions in logical and ethical philosophy. They are, in general, shrewd, discriminating and mild in their demeanour. The modesty of their character does not consist in adjectness to a supposed or official superior, but is equally shown to each other. I have observed some of the worthiest speak with unaffected humility of their own pretensions to learning, with admiration of the learning of a stranger and countryman who was present, with high respect of the learning of a townsman who happened to be absent, and with just praise of the learning of another townsman after he had retired, although in his presence they were silent respecting his attainments."

The pandits have at least preserved the precious heritage bequeathed by our ancestors. But for them much of it would have been irrecoverably lost. Instead of being grateful to them, to load them with contumely, argues a degree of flippancy and narrowmindedness which one would be loath to associate with "liberal culture." Our outlook on life is certainly broader than that of the pandits.\* But how many of us have either the time or the inclination to inquire whether it is not shallower than of yore? We have learnt to take a brighter view of mundane life than the pandits, but is not much of the brightness the mere shine of flimsy tinsel?

As another example of pro-Western prepossession, I may cite the exaggerated importance which is attached to politics by a considerable section of the Neo-Hindus. As Flinders Petric rightly observes :

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\* In the course of the recent agitation against the extortion of so called dowries, I have personally heard the most learned and orthodox pandits of Bengal expressing the opinion that girls should remain unmarried even for life, if worthy husbands cannot be found for them, and quoting the Shastras in support of this opinion; and the views of these pandits have appeared in the papers. On the other hand loud-tongued advocacy of child-marriage has come from graduates and other "English-educated" men, some of them not unknown to fame.—*Editor, Modern Review.*

"Government is of great concern but of little import. Constitutional history is a barren figment compared with the permanent value of Art, Literature, Science, or Religion. What man does is the essential in each civilization, how he advances in capacities, and what he bequeaths to future ages?"

Government help is invoked even in matters in which a government, especially an alien government, can do but little permanent good. In the words of Herbert Spencer,

"conceiving the State-agency as though it were something more than a mere cluster of men (a few clever, many ordinary, and some decidedly stupid), we ascribe to it marvellous powers of doing multitudinous things which men otherwise clustered are unable to do. We petition it to procure for us in some way which we do not doubt it can find, benefits of all orders; and pray it with unfaltering faith to secure us from every fresh evil. Time after time our hopes are balked. The good is not obtained, or something bad comes with it; the evil is not cured, or some other evil as great or greater is produced. Our journals, daily and weekly, general and local perpetually find failures to dilate upon; now blaming, and now ridiculing, first this department and then that. And yet, though the rectification of blunders, administrative and legislative, is a main part of public business—though the time of the Legislature is chiefly occupied in amending and again amending, until after the many mischiefs implied by these needs for amendments, then often comes at last repeal; yet from day to day, increasing numbers of wishes are expressed for legal repressions and statemanagement. After endless comments on the confusion and apathy and delay of government offices other government offices are advocated. After ceaseless ridicule of red-tape, the petition is for more red-tape. Daily we castigate the political idol with a hundred pens, and daily pray to it with a thousand tongues."\*

In the instances of bias which I have cited there is a tacit assumption that it is harmful. But it may be reasonably urged, what

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\* "Revolutions of Civilization," p.123.

\*\* "The Study of Sociology"-pp.160-61, 170.

grounds have I for such assumption? That we have to adapt ourselves to our new environment is admitted on all hands. Such adaptation renders the adoption of Western views and Western methods to some extent inevitable. But to what extent? How are we to judge when we are going too far on the Western path? or having gone some distance, how far backward must we retrace our steps on the Indian path? How are we to ascertain when our judgement is being vitiated by the pro-Western or the pro-Indian bias? How are the aberrations of our judgement to be rectified?

We must have a standard; and to my mind, we cannot have a better one than in the principle of equilibrium referred to in the beginning of my previous article. As I have pointed out there, the equilibrium is necessarily a moving one. But, the preservation of the integrity of our civilization, the motion should as necessarily be within such limits as would not cause any large deviation from the equilibrated situation. We must always have that situation in view; anything which takes us so far away from it as to make us lose sight of it altogether may be taken to be detrimental; anything which does not do that may be expected to be either beneficial or at least innocuous. Applying this principle to the doctrine of the infallibility of the Samhita portion of the Vedas and of its being the source of all religion and all science entertained by an influential section of the Neo-Hindu community, we find that it carries us back to a stage of civilization which not withstanding occasional gleams of high thought and noble sentiment in that valuable work had been left far behind in a subsequent stage when there was effected an equipoised condition of the various forces of civilization, material, intellectual, ethical and spiritual. The thinkers of the brightest period of Indo-Aryan intellectual progress had to a great extent got over that belief—a belief which, in the words of the late Prof. Huxley,

“has all the world over done endless mischief. With impartial malignity it has proved a curse, alike to those who have made it and to those who have accepted it. The dead hand of a book sets and stiffens amidst texts and formulas until it becomes a mere petrification, fit only for that function of stumbling block which it so admirably performs.”\*

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\* “Life of T.H. Huxley” by P.C. Mitchell, p. 227.

Our reformers and thinkers have sought for light and inspiration not in the Vedas but in the Upanishads and the systems of philosophy, especially the Vedanta. The propagation of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Samhita portion of the Vedas and of its being the source of all religion and all science carries us too far back on the Indian path to a known stage of inferior progress far antecedent to that of equilibrium, and is, therefore, adverse to the life of our civilization.

The Western outlook on life, a strong predelection for which is entertained by the great majority of the Neo-Hindus, is still dominantly material, inasmuch as it seeks to accomplish the well-being of man chiefly by material developments, by the gratification of his senses, and by adding to his physical comforts and conveniences the outer life being more thought of than the inner. Such Western prepossessions as are the results of this grossly material standpoint may be taken to be generally prejudicial to the preservation of the individuality of our civilization, in that they take us back to a decidedly inferior stage which we had long ago passed through. Among the more notable of such prepossessions, may be mentioned, the recent introduction of wealth as the standard of social rank and respectability, the exchange of the old ideal of plain and simple living for one of luxurious and complicated living and the prevalence of egoism over altruism, of selfishness over selflessness which is becoming such a marked feature of the Neo-Hindu Society. The condemnation of the Pandits which we have cited above as a case of pro-Western bias is really the outcome of their materialistic view of life, however disguised it may be under such high-sounding but hollow shibboleths as "liberal culture" and "broad outlook of life" and is, therefore, unjustifiable. Most of us cannot reconcile the idea of culture in any shape with semi-nude men, living in hovels, squatting on mats, and eating the plainest of food.

But material development up to a certain point is an indispensable factor of civilization inasmuch as it is the antecedent to intellectual and ethical culture. The western contact has violently disturbed the equilibrium of our civilization by encompassing the virtual extinction of our indigenous industries and thereby depressing our material condition to an extent which if permitted to last much longer would be sure to prove detrimental to higher culture. Our industrial regeneration is, therefore, the *sine qua non* of the restoration of the equilibrium of our civilization. This regeneration must be effected, at

least partly, on modern methods which are based upon the wonderful advancement of the Natural Sciences which has been effected in the West within the last century. Such predilection, therefore, as is now being increasingly evinced by our educated countrymen for those sciences is all to the good provided we keep in view the ethical and spiritual ideals which have kept our community from perishing on the shoals of materialism.

*(P.N. Bose)*

### **INDO-EUROPEAN RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN ANCIENT INDIA**

The history of Indo-Aryan religious is not simply an Indian phenomenon, starting from fundamental conceptions which have been developed on Indian soil. The Vedic Aryans had brought with them notions and ideas from their old home, where they had lived together with their Iranian brothers, who also called themselves Aryans, and these pre-historic Aryans had, in their turn, inherited religious thoughts and customs from their Indo-European ancestors.

In order to fully understand the later development it would, therefore, be necessary to know what was inherited both from the Aryan and from the Indo-European period, and it is even probable that such knowledge is absolutely essential, because the later structures are built up on the old foundation without which they would perhaps be liable to decay as an uprooted tree.

# 11

## Agriculture, Trade and Industry

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### I

#### Agriculture

##### 1. Land Revenue

It has been held in the *Mbh* (12.78.2), that the king was the owner of all the properties belonging to the non-*brahmanas*, as well as of those *brahmanas* who followed an unapproved profession. This view is corroborated by Yudhishthira's act when after the *Asvamedha* sacrifice he donated his entire kingdom to Vyasa and Vyasa returned it to him (14.91.7.17). From this it appears that theoretically all the land in the kingdom belonged to the king.<sup>1</sup> There was, however, another theory.

The king's share of the revenue was limited to one-sixth of the produce of the land (13.113.16). A wellknown verse in the *Mbh* (12.72.10) says :

*bali-sasthena sulkena*  
*danden=ath=aparadhinam*  
*sastr=anitena lipsetha*  
*vetanena dhan=agamam* (12.308, 158)

(The king should wish only for his lawful salary [which consists of] one-sixth of the produce, *sulka* [various taxes] and money realised as fines.)

It is also stated (12.25.12 and 12.69.24) that the king gets the revenue (*bali*) of one-sixth of the produce, because he protects the

people. This again was a theory, for there is no indication that the kings ceased to collect revenue if they failed to give protection.

The *Mbh* differs from Manu (7.130) which lays down that the king should take one-twelfth, one-eighth or one-sixth of the grains as his share. Kulluka explains that this difference in the royal revenue was based on the fertility of the soil, and the amount of labour necessary to produce the crop [that is, the distance of the nearest available irrigation water]. This difference in revenue rate is found in other *Dharmashastra* texts also, such as *Gautama* (10.24-25) and *Brhaspati*. Others, however, like *Bodhayana* (1.18.1) and *Vasistha* (1.42) merely state that the king's share is one-sixth of the produce (lit. wealth or income of his subjects).

There is one reference in the *Mbh* indicative of a lower revenue. It states :

*yas=ca raja mah=orsahah*  
*ksatra=dharma rato bhavet*  
*sa tusyed dasa-bhagena*  
*tatas=tv=anyo das-avaraih* (12.308, 158)

(The high spirited king, who is engaged in the performance of *kshatriya's* duty is satisfied with one-tenth, and others with even less.)

'Others' have been explained as 'lesser kings', but it is difficult to understand as to why the smaller kings should have been satisfied with a lower share of the revenue. But this verse is a recommendation by a woman ascetic and need not be considered seriously.

On the whole, it appears that the contemplated land-revenue was one-sixth of the produce of the land irrespective of any other consideration. This flat rate would have discriminated against small holders, cultivators of less fertile lands, and those farmers who had to fetch irrigation water from a distance. The nature of produce was also not taken into consideration. If the same rate of revenue was universally applied the fruit growers would have suffered compared to growers of coarse grain. It is stated in the *Mbh* 7.44.27 that a mango garden bears fruit after five years. Even if during these five years the mango-grower did not pay any revenue, it would have been hard on him if one-sixth of his produce were collected as revenue on the first year's fruit. Possibly there were some methods of adjustment which we do not know.



In the *Ram* (3.1.18) it is said that the king's share is one-fourth, but from a later reference (3.5.10) it appears that revenue was one-sixth of the produce. It is quite possible that the higher revenue was levied on fertile and irrigated lands.

There is no means of ascertaining the total revenue of a kingdom. It is stated that *brahmanas*, *vajadhanas*, and a large number of owners of herds of cows (*gomantas*) were found waiting on Yudhisthira with revenue (*bali*) amounting to three *kharvas* (2.45.24). A *Kharva* denotes 10,000,000,000, hence three *kharvas*, in whatever coin, would be an incredible figure. It is evident that this description of Yudhisthira's wealth by Vidura is highly exaggerated, but it gives an idea of the large amount of revenue. Secondly, since the *brahmanas* were bringing *bali* it is apparent that they too were not exempt.<sup>2</sup> *Vatadhana* means the descendant of an out-caste *brahmana* by *brahmani* mother, and probably indicates a *brahmana* community engaged in agriculture as distinct from other *brahmanas* mentioned in the verse, who had their land tilled by *vaisyas* or *sudras*. They may be called the ancestors of present day *jordars*. But under the caste system, they would be deemed to be more honourable than those who soiled their lands by tilling the soil.

The practice of share-cropping is directly referred to not only in the *Mbh*, but by Manu and Yajnavalkya also. The *Mbh*, (12.60.24-25) allows the *vaisyas* one-seventh of all the produces of the land which he has cultivated on behalf of either a *brahmana* or of a *rajan*, which normally means a king, but in the present context seems to indicate *kshatriyas* in general. Manu (4.253) says:

*ardhikah kula-mitram ca*  
*gopalo dasa-napitau*  
*ete sudresu bhojy=anna*  
*yas=c=atmanam nivedayer*

([A *brahmana*] may eat food cooked by a *sudra* who is, an *ardhika*, or a friend of the family [for several generations] or a slave, (for servant), or a barber, or one who has offered his service.)

Medhatithi has explained *ardhika* as *ardhasiri*, presumably following Yajnavalkya (1.166) who practically repeats Manu:

*sudresu aasa-gopala-*  
*kulamitr-ardhasirinah*

*bhojy=anna napitas=c=aiva*  
*yas=c=atmanam nivedayet*

The two verses are identical except that Yajnavalkya uses *ardhasiri* instead of *ardhika*, but both the words means 'a plough-man who takes half the crop for his labour'.

It is however peculiar, that while Manu and Yajnavalkya allow a *sudra* share-cropper to take half the produce, the *Mbh* allows, a *vaisya* only one-seventh. This discrepancy can have two explanations.

Firstly, while we have rendered *ardhika* and *ardhastri* literally, the commentators have not done so. Medhatithi explains the two terms as *kutumbi bhumi-karsaka*, which means simply a 'share-cropper'. Kulluka explain the term *ardhika* as *karsika*, that is, 'a cultivator'. Neither of them says anything about the share which was the *ardhika*'s due. Similarly, Vijnanesvara explains *ardhasiri* as *krsi-phala-bhagagrahi*, which also means simply a 'share-cropper', and Vijnanesvara too does not mention the share. It seems, therefore, that whatever may be the literal meaning of *ardhika* and *ardhasiri*, the actual tiller's share depended on contractual terms or local usage and custom, but in no case exceeded half the produce.

The other explanation may be that the *vaisya* merely supervised the cultivation which was done by the *ardhika*, and one-seventh of the produce was given to the former as his fees as a steward, or as an intermediary.

It will be noted that both Manu and Yajnavalkya have used the word *dasa* in this connection. But Medhatithi explains the compound *gopala-dasau* as related terms, meaning 'a cowherd who is a *dasa*' and does not explain *dasa* which may mean either a servant or a slave. Kulluka takes the compound to mean 'a cowherd and a *dasa*', but does not explain *dasa*. Vijnanesvara, however, explains *dasa* as *garbhadasadayah* (one who is born a *dasi* from a slave).

From Medhatithi's explanation it follows that a *brahmana* (or a *kshatriya*) had his land cultivated by *sudra* share-croppers and his cows were tended by *sudra* slaves. But though Kulluka and Vijnanesvara do not assign any specific duty to a *dasa*, it may be held that *dasas* or slaves were employed for all types of works including cultivation and animal-husbandry. This would explain the reason for donating slaves

of which many examples are given in the epics.

It may be noted that according to the *Mbh* and the *Dharmashastras*, the duties of a *vaisya* were *krsi*, *go-raksa* and *vanijya*. Evidently *vanija* (trade and commerce) being more profitable, the *vaisya* had given up his exclusive right to agriculture and animal husbandry in favour of the *sudra*.

## 2. Irrigation

The irrigation of land was as much necessary in ancient times as it is now. It was also realized that dependence on rain water for irrigation was not expedient. In a wellknown verse in the *Mbh* (2.5.67), the sage Narada tells Yudhishthira :

*kaccid rastre tadagani  
purnani ca brhanti ca  
bhagaso vinivistani  
na krsir=devamatrka*

(‘I hope that in your domain the tanks are full and increasing [in numbers] and [the water] is divided proportionately; agriculture [should not depend] on rainfall’.)

This was good advice. Diggings of wells and tanks were also considered to be meritorious *purta* work, which induced kings and rich people to engage themselves in such activities. However, it does not appear that the peasant did not have to depend on rain. In the *Ram*, Sita employs a charming simile to compare her pleasure in seeing Hanumat:

*tvam drstva priya-vaktaraim  
samprahrasyami vanara  
ardha-samjata-sasy=eva  
vrstim prapya vasundhara* (5.38.2)

(My happiness in seeing you, O sweet-spoken *vanara*, is like that of earth when she receives rain on her budding crops’.<sup>3</sup>)

Several times in the *Mbh*, waiting with extreme eagerness is illustrated with the simile of a peasant waiting for rain (*suvrstim iva* or *parjanya iva karsakah*, 12.349.6; 13.59.14; 13.62.20; 13-24.49; 13.70.10) and in 13.97.23 it is said that all crops are raised by rain water. Excess of rain was also damaging, whence the proverb *gatodake*

*setu-bandha* (dam built after the water receded) in *Ram* (2.9.41) and *Mbh* (7.62.2).

*Utsecane stambha* is mentioned in 12.288.22. It has been held that this phrase probably refers to the water-lifting apparatus (Tamil : *Erram*) familiar in South India. A stout or full-grown stump of a tree, served as the fulcrum for the bamboo pole, at the end of which was attached the pitcher for lifting up water from the deep well. The epics do not contain any other reference to artificial irrigation.

There was of course no scientific study of rainfall, but some acute observations have been made. Ramachandra while describing the rainy season begins by observing:

*pitva rasam samudranam*  
*dyatth prasute rasayanam* (4.27.3)

(Having drunk the moisture of the sea, the sky produces rain. [lit. elixir of life].

Almost the same observation is made in the *Mbh* where it is said that

‘the sun’s rays receive the moisture and then the sun pours down rain. Rain gives birth to *anna* (crops) and *anna* is the life of men. Trees, flowers and plants depend on rains’.

(13.97.20-23). The cycle of cloud, rain, crops, and life is fully described also in 13.62.36-40, from which it also appears that cultivation depended on rainfall.

These observations show that people were noticing the causes of rainfall, and were no longer content, as in the Vedic days to rely entirely on Indra to produce rain, whom they had to propitiate by performing sacrifices. The *Gita* (3.14), however, repeats the old view and ascribes rainfall to the performance of sacrifice which is therefore recommended. The *Mbh* (5.97.7) only goes to the extent of saying that Airavana (Indra’s elephant or cloud) collects water from the sea with which Indra produces rain. No rain-producing sacrifice is mentioned in the epics except in the *Gita*.

There is a reference to extensive irrigation work in the *Ram* (2.74.10-11). It is said that while Bharata was marching with his host to meet Ramachandra in the forest, his men erected dams, wherever,

it was possible to do so, and soon excavated water courses to carry off excess water (*parivahan bahudakan*,) and created many lakes as large as oceans. They also excavated wells of various kinds, and had them surrounded by raised platforms.

In the same context it is said that while Bharata's men felled many trees to prepare the road, they planted trees where there was none (2.74-6-7). Here is probably an early reference to afforestation.

There is no other reference to canal-irrigation in the epics, and it has to be concluded that cultivation depended primarily on rainfall. The tanks and wells served as secondary sources of irrigation water, but these too were liable to become dry in case of acute shortage of rainfall, particularly over an extended period. There is a reference in the *Mbh* to a period of twelve years' famine during which there was no rain (12.139.13). The food situation became so acute that the sage Visvamitra was forced to steal dog's flesh from a *condala*'s house and eat it (12.139.88-9). It should be noted here, that the only reference to any incident in the *Mbh* in Manu is Visvamitra's violation of food restriction on this occasion (Manu 10.108). Actually this was *apad-dharma* or *dharma* during distress, when a higher caste was allowed to take up the profession of a lower caste.<sup>4</sup> The existence of such rules in the *Mbh* and in the *Dharmashastra* texts show that occurrence of distress, which usually means a famine, was not too infrequent. There would of course be no famine even if the rain failed in the countries situated along a perennial river. But transport of corn from a non-famine area to a famine area in those days must have been impossible. So in the areas away from the river people suffered if the rains did not come.

### 3. Rotation of Crops

The epics do not provide details about agriculture, which had considerably developed Vedic times. The *Taittiriya Samhita* (5.1.73) states that there was two harvests every year and adds (7.2.10.2): 'Barely ripens in summer, medicinal herbs in the rainy season; *vrihi* (rice) in *sarat*: beans and 'sesamum in *hemanta* and *sisira* (winter)...'. Apparently there was a rotation of crops, *yava* (barley) being followed by *vrihi* (rice), *masa* (bean) and *tila* (sesamum). This is corroborated by the *Gobhila* (1.4.29) and the *khadira* (1.5.37) which state: From the rice [harvest] till the barley (harvest) or from the barley (harvest) till the rice [harvest] he should offer the *balis* or sacrificial rites".<sup>4a</sup>

Kautilya (2.24.12-15) also prescribes rotation of crops and states; 'sali, vrihi, kodrava, tila, priyangu, udaraka and varaka are the first (first sowings); mudga, masa and saimbya are middle sowings; kusumbha (safflower), masura, kulattha, yava, godhuma, kalayat, atasi (linseed) and sarsapa, are the last sowings. Or, the sowing of seeds should be in conformity with the seasons.'

Kautilya has used the word 'vapa' which means 'sowing', but it is difficult to see how *vrihi* and *sali* could be sown together. Is it possible that Kautilya's knowledge of rice cultivation was not quite up-to-date? He does not seem to have been very sure of himself, wherefore the alternative that seeds should be sown according to season (2.24.15).

*Sali* rice is not mentioned in the *Vedas*. Roth's conjecture that *sari* in *sari-saka* in the *Atharvaveda* (3.14.5) is equivalent to *sali* is not at all convincing. *Sali* is, however, mentioned in both the epics, and these are probably the earliest references to the winter crop. In the *Ram* (3.15.16-17), while describing the *hemanta* season, Lakshmana speaks of early winter with forests full of *yava* (barley) and *godhuma*. He then describes the golden *sali* and compares the ripe ears of corn with *kharjura* (date) flowers. In the *Mbh* (5.81.7) it is stated that Kṛṣṇa set out for Hastinapura in the month of Kaumudī (Kārttika). On his way he saw beautiful rice-fields (*sali-bhavanam*) full of all sorts of grains (5.82.15).

#### 4. State and Agriculture

The epics do not say as to what steps, if any, the government undertook to alleviate suffering during famines. The nature of the *apad-dharma* rules raises the presumption that during a period of scarcity, a man had to fend for himself as best as he could, and by any available means.

It was, however, contemplated that the State should foster agriculture by providing the peasant with loans at easy rates of interest. In the *Mbh* (2.5.66-68), the sage Nārada first says, that he hopes that the peasants are satisfied. He then asks about the existence of irrigation facilities such as water tanks and warns against depending on rain for cultivation, as has been stated above. He then adds:

*kaccin na bhaktam bijam ca*  
*karsakasy=avasīdati*

*pratikam ca satain vrdhya*  
*dadasy=rnam anugraham (2.5.68)*

(I' hope that the cultivators are not dejected by the want of food or seed; (and I hope that) you are advancing 'assistance-loans' at the interest of one *pratika* per hundred.)

A '*pratika*' means 'worth a *karsapana* or 16 *panas*'. *Karsapana* could be of copper, silver, or gold, and it is not clear what was actually meant. It may be that, interest at 16% or 6¼% per year is intended but another explanation is possible. Manu (8.142) allows interest on unsecured loans at the rate of 2%, 3%, 4% and 5% monthly on money lent to *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas*, *vaisyas*, and *sudras* respectively. Vajnavalkya (2.37), Narada (1.99.101) and Vashistha (2.48) follow Manu (8.142) but Vashistha states that the interest for a moneylender is 5 *masas* for 20 *karsapanas* per month. Kautilya (3.11.1) says that 'one *pana* and a quarter is the legal rate of interest per month on one hundred *panas*, five *panas* for purchases of trade, ten *panas* for those going through the forests, twenty *panas* for those going by sea.'

It will be observed that all the *Dharmashastras* provide for different rates of interest based on caste, from which Kautilya differs. Here the *Mbh* differs from all of them and agrees with *Kautilya*. Secondly, the rate of interest in the *Mbh* is lower than that sanctioned by the authorities quoted above. This lower rate was obviously due to the loan being an '*anugraha-rna*', which we have rendered as 'assistance-loan'. Thirdly, it was usual to calculate interest with monthly rest in ancient India, but here monthly interest even at 6¼% would be too high. The use of the word *pratika* seems to indicate that money was advanced at the time of sowing and recovered in kind after the harvest, and for each 100 *panas* the cultivator had to pay corn worth 116 *panas*.

On the subject of loan, it may be stated that probably calculation of daily interest (*i.e.* compound interest with daily rest), was known. It is stated in 13.148.30:

*yatha vardhusiko vrddhim*  
*dinabhede (or dehabhede) pratiksate*  
*dharmena pihitam papam*  
*dharmam ev=abhivardhayet*

If the reading is *dina-bhede*, as given in the Bombay edition, is accepted, then it would mean interest charged daily, but if *deha-bheda* of the Critical edition is accepted, it would mean interest charged after the death [of the debtor], and the verse would mean; 'Just as interest continues to be charged by a creditor even after the death (*deha-bhede*) of the debtor, so does the sin committed in this life continue to increase in the next life.' Manu (8.153) mentions four kinds of interest which does not include *dinabheda*. But Brihaspati mentions six kinds of interest one of which is called *sikha-vrddhi* or 'hair-like interest', meaning interest payable every day and so growing everyday, just as the top-knot on one's head grew every day.<sup>5</sup>

## II

### Trade

#### 1. Definition of Wealth

Wealth has been defined in the *Mbh* (5.112.2) as :

*dhatte dharayate c=edam*  
*etasmāt karanād dhanam*  
*tad etat trisu lokesu*  
*dhanain tisthati sasvatam*

(It sustains and causes others to sustain this world, therefore it is called wealth; thus in the three worlds, wealth is the constant [factor]).

In the *Ram* (3.41.34), Ramachandra says to Lakshmana:

'Lakshmana, those learned in *arthashastra* defines *artha* as that, to earn which *arthins* (industrious men desirous of wealth) set out unhesitatingly so that their wants may be satisfied.'

When Yudhisthira inquired from Vyasa the comparative merits of *dana* (gifts) and *tapas* (penance or special observance) the sage replied (3.245-27-30) that gifts were superior, because

'there is hankering for money, which is acquired with great pain. For its sake men give up even their dear lives, and enter the forest or the ocean. Some men take up agriculture or the upkeep of cows, while others wishing for a job leave their homes. It is difficult to part with what has been earned with so much



suffering? Hence, in my opinion, nothing is more difficult to be borne than parting with wealth as gift'.

It is thus evident that the epic poets were aware of the role of money in a civilized society. Indeed the following verses would indicate that the epic society was acquisitive both by instinct and inclination. Arjuna said to Yudhishthira:

'Just as many rivers flow from a mountain, similarly with accumulated wealth all meritorious deeds can be performed. O king, wealth leads to *dharma*, *kama*, and heaven; even maintenance of life would be impossible without money. Actions of foolish poor men are as unproductive as a dry pond in summer. He who has money has friends and relatives, the wealthy man is indeed a man; he (alone) is learned. Performance of *dharma*, satisfaction of desire, attainment of heaven, enjoyment of merriment, venting of anger, results of listening to the sacred texts, and suppression of enemies are only possible if one has money. A poor man desires but is unable to acquire it; but, just as a great elephant is followed by a herd of elephants, so does money pursue a wealthy man.: (12.8.16-21).

The *Mbh* does not favour the idea that poverty is the passport to heaven. It is said (12.308.50);

*akincanye na mokso'sti*  
*kincanye n=asti bandhanam*  
*kincanye c=etare c=aiva*  
*jantur=jnanena mucyate*

(Poverty does not lead to *moksa*, nor does affluence cause bondage; one gains salvation through knowledge, whether he is a poor or rich).

This verse is intended to discourage householders from taking a vow of poverty, or to feel that indolence and insensitiveness to wants were forms or religious observances.

We have described the condition of poor man in the next chapter. The picture that emerges from the epics is that of a vigorous society intent on luxurious style of living. This attitude made the acquisition of wealth an essential object of life. The uninhibited pursuit of material welfare was mainly restricted to two castes, the *kshatriyas* and the *vaisyas*, though the *sudras* were probably not entirely left out. The moral of the Bharata War is that even the most high-minded *kshatriya*

would not stop at anything to gain his ends.<sup>7</sup> Trade and commerce were the exclusive preserves of the *vaishyas*, and partly at least of *sudras* also. There is no reason to believe that they were less keen than the *kshatriyas* to attain their ends, or were more human in their disposition.

## 2. *Varta*

The *Mbh* (3.149.31) says :

*trayi varta dandanitis=  
tisro vidyu vijanatam*

(The three *Vedas*, *varta* and the *dandaniti* are the three sciences.)

Of these the study of the *Vedas* and of the *dandaniti* were for the *brahmanas* and the *kshatriyas* respectively, while *varta* was in the domain of the *vaishyas*. This is in accordance with Manu 7.43, and very closely agrees with Kautilya and the authorities quoted by him (1.2.1-4).

The *Mbh* (12.68.35) says :

*varta-mulo hy=ayam lokas=  
trya vai dharyate sada*

(This world is rooted in *varta*, and is sustained by its trine aspect.)

Emphasizing the importance of *varta*, Arjuna told Yudhisthira (12.161.10):

*karma-bhumir=iyam rajann=  
iha varta prasasyate  
krsi-vanijya-goraksam  
silpani vividhani ca*

(O King, this is the world of performance; here *varta* reigns; [*varta* is] agriculture, trade, upkeep of cows and various arts and crafts.)

To this list Bhimasena adds the *karus*, that is technicians and mechanics. Of these vocations Kautilya assigns agriculture, cattle rearing, and trade to *vaishyas* and *varta*, *karu* and *kusilava-karma* to *sudras* (1.3.7-8).

Kautilya has explained (1.4.1) that *varta* is *krsi-pasupalye vanijya ca varta*. It is evident that Kautilya is allowing the *sudras* to engage in trade, which is not in strict conformity with the *Dharmashastras*,

particularly during normal times. But it seems that the position of the *sudras* in the *Mbh*, though not unequivocal, is more in line with Kautilya than with Manu.

Of the three main branches of *varta*, agriculture has been discussed above. We shall now discuss the other two, namely, cattle-rearing and trade.

### 3. Cattle-rearing

The term usually employed in the *Dharmashastras* and the *Mbh* is *go-raksa*, that is 'upkeep of cows'. But the references in the *Mbh* to wool show that, sheep, and probably goats too, were reared. As has been noted above, Kautilya uses the term '*pasupalya*' which includes all the three animals. It is possible that the *vaisyas* raised only cows, while the *sudras* kept all sorts of domestic animals.

From the Vedic times, cow has been regarded as a form of wealth, and gift of cows to the *brahmanas* was considered to be a highly meritorious act. Dilating upon the merit of such gifts, Bhishma says:

*payasa habisa dadhna*  
*sakrta c=atha carmana*  
*asthibhis=c=opakurvanti*  
*srngair=valais=ca Bharata* (13.65.38)

('O Bharata, [cows] provide [us] with milk, *ghi*, curd, dung, skin, bones, horns, and hair.')

The use of cow's hair is difficult to explain. Cow's bone could have been used as a manure. Cow's horn have no use now, and it is buffaloes' horn which is used to make various objects of art and toys. Cow-dung is used both as manure and as a fuel.

The skin etc. must have been of a cow which died a natural death, for giving of a cow for the purpose of slaughtering it is prohibited. It is also stipulated that one should not give a cow for slaughter or to a *kinasa* or to a *nastika* (13.65.49) *Kinasa* is sometimes explained as 'one who tills the soil with bulls or cows.' But this rendering is unsatisfactory, as bulls have been used continuously from the Vedic times for drawing plough. One commentator has explained *kinasa* as *daridra* (poor), which seems to be the proper explanation. A poor man would be unable to feed the cow properly and might be tempted to over-

work it. *Nastika* means an atheist, and the *Mbh* has denounced them in various places. As the gift of a cow was intended to bring religious merit to the donor, it was useless to give it to an irreligious man.

Cow was not only used for drawing a plough<sup>8</sup> but also used for grinding corns (6.99.3).

There is some indication that the upkeep of cows was developed to the point of its becoming a 'big business'. A class of people is referred to (12.88.33-38) as *gomin*, who paid taxes (33), lived in forests (34) and caused the state, commerce and agriculture to flourish (36). Nilakantha has rendered the word *gomin* as *vaisya* which may not be wrong, but does not explain why they are called *aranyavasinah* (34). Dr. Belvalkar has explained that the *gomins* were a wandering tribe that tended herds of cattle in forest, and were in some measure the itinerant capitalists of the realm.<sup>9</sup> Dr. Belvalkar's suggestion seems to be quite justified.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. State Policy on Trade

Bhisma says to Yudhishthira that a king's income (*vetana*, lit. salary) is derived from *bali-sastha*, that is one-sixth of the crops as revenue, *sulka* (various taxes) and fines realised from offenders (12.72.10). We have already dealt with *bali* and are not here concerned with the fines. It is, however, necessary to discuss the nature and incidence of *sulka*.

In this connection Bhisma says that a man who daily attends to his cow enjoys her milk; similarly a king who looks after his subjects gains his objects (12.72.17) and then adds:

*malakaropama rajan*  
*bhava m=angarikopamah*  
*thatha-yuktas=ciram rajyam*  
*bhoktam saksyasi palayan* (12.72.20)

('O king, be like a gardener, and not like a charcoal-burner, and thus you would be able to enjoy your kingdom for a long time.')

The idea is that a gardener waters the plants daily, weeds them, adds nourishment in the form of manure, and guards them carefully. As a result he is rewarded with flower and fruits year after year. On the other hand, a charcoal-burner cuts down the tree and burns the

wood, thereby getting only one supply of charcoal. Similarly if a king overtaxes his people, he may gain temporarily, but will ruin agriculture, trade, and commerce. By fostering their growth, he will benefit permanently.

The principle of taxation was based on what may be called the theory of gradualness. As Bhishma said to Yudhishthira (12.89.5-13) :

‘O king, one should drink the state (*i.e.* collect taxes) [as imperceptibly] as a leech [sucks the blood], or as a tigress, which carries her child without biting or letting it fall. Just as a rat gnaws at the foot of a sleeping man so softly that the man merely shakes his legs slightly, so should a state be taxed (*lit.* drunk). [The king] should increase his prosperity by making the [subjects] give little by little. Then he should increase [the tax] gradually but certainly. Just as a young bull’s load is frequently increased by very small measures [so do you begin to tax lightly and increase the taxes gradually,] without drawing the noose [through the bull’s nose] too lightly. Once the noose is properly fastened (*i.e.* the bull is under control) it cannot become violently disposed; thus should the bull be trained to carry the full load. It is difficult for a king to control everybody, so he should propitiate the leaders and enjoy (*i.e.* collect taxes) from the ordinary men. Thereafter, by creating a division between the two groups, mutually staring at each other, the king can, at his pleasure, effortlessly enjoy (*i.e.* collect taxes from) all persons by consoling them. The king should not impose taxes on them at the wrong place and at the wrong time. [The king should collect taxes] in proper time, in proper manner, mildly, and in due order.’

Bhishma again says (12.88.17-20):

‘A wise man should [collect taxes] from the State on the analogy of cows. O Yudhishthira, the calf of an undermilked cow is stronger and capable of carrying heavier load than the calf of a overmilked cow. Similarly a State is impoverished by over taxation.<sup>11</sup> The king who treats his State with kindness and maintains himself within his income achieves great result’.

Manu (7.129) also recommends that a king should collect taxes as gradually as a leech sucks blood, a calf drink milk, or a bee collects honey. The purport of this recommendation is, as Kulluka, explains,

that the king should not destroy the capital (*muladhanam anucchindata*), but collect the taxes gradually in instalments.

This was a shrewd but practical principle of taxation, which was not inimical to the development of trade and industry. As the quantum of tax depended upon the prosperity of trade and industry, the kings were advised to foster them carefully, for, the yield of revenue from taxes on trade and commerce was only next to land revenue. And while the land-revenue was more or less fixed and depended on the vagaries of the season, these taxes or *sulka* provided the kings with an ever-growing source of income.

Narada's advice to Yudhisthira was (2.5.103-07):

'I hope that foreign merchants are made to pay taxes (*sulka*) by your officers. I hope that the merchants bringing merchandise are not cheated or insulted by your officers...I hope that you are providing the craftsmen (*silpins*) capital (*dravya*) and accessories (*upakarana*) sufficient to last for four months'.

Narada's advice partly agrees with Kautilya's direction to the Director of Trade (2.16.11-13):

'He should encourage the import of goods produced in foreign lands by [allowing] concessions. And to those [who bring such goods] in ships or caravans, he should grant exemptions [from taxes] that would enable a profit [to be made by them]. And no law-suit in money matters [should be allowed] against foreign traders, except as are members [of native concerns] and [their] associates'.<sup>12</sup>

Providing the craftsmen with capital and implements was intended for supporting the industry. It is possible that here is the origin of the State-owned factories described by Kautilya.

The *gomins* (cow-herds) have already been described above. They also had to pay tax, and the king is advised to look after their interest and support them by all possible means (12.88.35).

*Regarding the mode of taxation, it is stated:*

*vikrayam krayam adhvanam  
bhaktam ca saparivyayam  
yoga-ksemam ca sampreksya*

*vanijam karayet karan*  
*upattim dana-vrttim ca*  
*silpam sampreksya c=asakrt*  
*silpa-pratikaran evam*  
*silpinah prati karayet* (12.88.12)

('Merchants should be made to pay taxes after taking into consideration the sale price, the purchase price, transport charges, cost of barley-meal, rice and other eatables like pulses, vegetables, *ghi* etc. [for labourers] and the charges paid to the guards for affording protection during transit.'<sup>13</sup>

'Craftsmen should be made to pay taxes after taking into consideration their *upattim*, that is, their mode of production [including the cost of raw materials], *dana-vrtti*, that is, their method of distribution of income [including wages paid to labourers] *silpam*, that is, quality of the produced goods, and *silpa-pratikaran*, that is, taxes per piece of goods produced or taxes in kind.')

*Mbh* 12.88.11 is exactly similar to Manu 7.127 which says :

*kraya-vikrayam adhvanam*  
*bhaktam ca saparivyayam*  
*yoga-ksemamca sampreksya*  
*vanijo dapayet karan*

Manu (8.401) lays down the same principle regarding fixing of prices.

Several parallel passages from the *Mbh* and Manu have been quoted above. Which of these two is the borrower has engaged the attention of scholars for a long time. Discussion of this problem here will be a digression, hence it is being avoided. Still it may be suggested that many floating verses were held to be authoritative, which were incorporated both in the *Mbh* and Manu.

Kautilya's regulations do not contain the provisions of Manu and the *Mbh*. However, he lays down (4.2.36): 'In the case of commodities coming from a distance, the expert in fixing prices (Director of Trade) shall fix the price after calculating the investment, the production of goods [*i.e.* the quality and the quantity], duty [in transit] interest, rent, and other expenses'.

Thus it will be evident, that taxation was not intended to be a general impost neither was it an *ad valorem* duty; efforts were made to ascertain the profit which alone was taxable. It has to be concluded that if the sale of his products did not yield a profit, the merchant did not have to pay any tax. It was more in the nature of income or profit tax than excise or import duty.

The provision regarding the supply of capital and implements to craftsmen (2.5.107) is peculiar to the *Mbh*. Evidently the measure recommended by Narada would have encouraged production, and may have developed into the idea of the State owned factories described by Kautilya. It may be recalled that Yudhisthira was advised by Narada also to grant loans on easy terms to cultivators. Probably the same kind of assistance to craftsmen was intended. Such loans would have rendered the peasants and the craftsman free from having to rely on the usurers.

Almost the first act of the Pandavas on receiving their patrimony from Dhritrastra was to 'measure' out adequate land for their new capital (1.199.29). Many traders from different countries speaking many languages (1.199.37) as well as all kinds of craftsmen (*sarvasilpa-vidah*) came to the new city and settled there (1.199.38). Evidently the Pandavas took adequate measures to attract trade and industry to their new capital, and if it can be identified with a place near Delhi, then a part of the commerce that flowed along the Ganges may be presumed to have been diverted through the Yamuna. If Hastinapura was located near Meerut, then it possibly lost part of its commercial importance due to the rise of the new Pandava capital of Indraprastha.

Even the king's pleasure was not without economic significance. Explaining the real import of hunting, Ramachandra said to Lakshmana:

"Kings go for hunting expeditions for meat and for pleasure. But due to this exertion they come across much wealth, various metals, gems, and Gold Wealth thus acquired augments the treasury' (3.41.29-31).

No avenue for gain was neglected by the kings, and one may be sure that their subjects followed the same principle.



### 5. Merchant's Organization

The epics speak of several organized groups of which the most interesting is the *vadhu-nataka-sangha* of the *Ram* (1.5.12), explained as theatrical groups composed entirely of women. Ayodhya is said to have several such groups.

The *Ram* mentions both *nigama* and *sreni*. In 2.13.2, it is related that the *amatya* (ministers), *bala-mukhyah* (commanders of the army) and *mukhya ye nigamasya ca* (heads of *nigamas*) came to attend Ramachandra's *abhiseka*. This statement is practically repeated a few verses later (2.13.19). While describing the arrangements made for Ramachandra's reception at Ayodhya after the war, it is said (6.115.13) what Bharata was accompanied with *brahmana-mukhyas*, and *sreni-mukhyas* with the *nigamas*? The words *sreni* and *nigama* are synonymous, both meaning 'guild'. Here it is meant that the 'heads of the guilds were present with the members of the guild'. During Ramachandra's coronation, scented water was poured on him by the persons noted below in the following order: *rtvij brahmanas*, sixteen maidens, ministers, soldiers, and *nigamas*.

*Nigamas* are again mentioned (7.82.17-18) alongwith general public (*bala-vrddhams=ca*), *brahmanas*, clever artisans (*karmantikas=ca kusalan*) and learned craftsmen (*silpinas=ca supanditan*).

After Ramachandra's departure for the forest, Dasaratha died, and Bharata returned to Ayodhya from Kekaya. A fortnight after his return, he was told that, having collected all the paraphernalia for anointing him his *svajana* (relatives, ministers etc.) and the *srenis* were waiting for him (2.73.4). Bharata refused to be crowned, and left with a huge retinue and citizens for the forest to induce Ramachandra to return. There Vasishtha addressing Ramachandra said: 'Here is your *parisads* (councillors), *srenis* and *nripas* (chieftains)'. (2.103.5) This grouping indicates that the *srenis* had a distinct political status.

In the *Mbh* the *srenis* do not seem to have been given the same importance as in the *Ram*. However, their importance can be deduced from one episode. After Duryodhana and the Kauravas were captured by the *gandharva* Citrasena, they were released by the exiled Pandavas. But Duryodhana felt so humiliated that he decided to give up his throne, and while declaring his decision to his brothers said: 'What reply shall

I give when asked by Bhisma, Drona, Kripa, Asvasthama, Vidura, Sanjaya, Bahlika, son of Somadatta, other elderly persons, *brahmanas*, *sreni-mukhyas* and others'. (3.238.14-15).

Duryodhana's reference to the *sreni-mukhyas* shows that they had some importance, but the absence of any other reference to them indicate a general decline in their position. This may have been due to the policy adopted by the kings during the age of the *Mbh*. As Bhisma advised Yudhisthira:

*srenimukhy-opajapesu*  
*vallabh=anunayesu ca*  
*amatyan parirakseta*  
*bheda-sanghatayor=api* 12.138.63

('Protect the ministers from the intrigues [*upajapa*, lit. acts of rebellion; cf. Manu, 9.275] of *sreni-mukhyas*, and from supplications by friends, they [the *sreni-mukhyas*] should neither be permitted to quarrel among themselves [*bhedo*] nor be allowed to present a united front').

*Vallabha* means a favourite, but in the present context it seems to indicate, a friend of the *sreni-mukhyas*, or the *Ram* (2.98.71) speaks of *naigama-yutha-vallabhah* (friends of the bands of *naigamas*). Probably the king is being asked to pay no heed to the entreaties of the friends of the rebellious or intriguing *sreni-mukhyas*, when the ministers recommended their punishment.

Once can, therefore, be certain that *nigama* in the epic meant an association of traders and craftsmen.

The *Mitaksara* on Yajnavalkya (1.361) explains *sreni* as a guild of betel-sellers. But Yajnavalkya mentions other guilds such as *pugas*, *ganas* etc. which are not mentioned in the epics. However, the *Mitaksara* on Yajnavalkya 2.30 explains that *puga* is an association of different castes and different avocations that stay in one locality, while the *sreni* is a group of different castes, that subsist by the occupation of one caste, and give *hedavukas* (horse-dealers), *tambulikas* (betel-leaf sellers or growers), *kuvindas* (weavers), and *carmakaras* (leather-workers, shoemakers) as examples of *srenis*. These examples, however, are of craft-guilds, but the *Vyavahara-mafrika* of Jimutavahana states that the *sreni* is an association of artisans or traders.<sup>14</sup>

Hence, as stated above, it is evident that, *sreni* and *nigama* in the epics meant any association of traders and craftsmen, and that the

later subdivision into *puga* etc., were unknown in the epic age.

Manu has mentioned *pasanda-gana-dharma* in 1.118, and *srenidharma* in 8.41. Now, Katyayana has explained *sangha* as 'a body of Buddhas or Jinas', and by analogy, *pasanda-gana* may mean 'a body of heretics'. But Medhatithi has explained *gana* as 'a union of *vanik-karu-kusilavas* (traders, artisans, and actors) while Kulluka merely says *vanikadinam samuhah* (union of traders etc.). But commenting on Manu 8.2, Medhatithi explains *sreni* as 'traders etc. who follow the same trade' and *gana* as builders of dwellings and *mathas* and *brahmanas* residing in *mathas*. Commenting on Manu, 8.41, Medhatithi explains *sreni* as *eka-karyapanna* (those engaged in the same trade or professions) and as examples cites *vanik-karu kusidacatturik-adayah*, (traders, artisans, moneylenders, charioters etc.), Kulluka, in the same context, explains *sreni* as *vanikadi* (traders etc.). It is evident, however, that even if Manu had used *gana* in 1.118 in the sense as understood by Medhatithi, there was hardly any difference between *gana* and *sreni*, and that the terms indicated unions or guilds of craftsmen or merchants.

The words *sreni* and *nigama* have been used in the epics, like *gana* and *sreni* of Manu, in a broad sense. The head of each *sreni* was called a *sreni-mukhya*, and apparently they enjoyed some status. It is, however, likely that due to the policy advocated by the *Mbh* (12.138.63) as explained above, a division was deliberately created among various unions or guilds, and different guilds were given different names as mentioned by Yajnavalkya, Katyayana and others. Thus instead of several *srenis*, there arose, *pugas*, *vratas*, *ganas*, etc. which would have had the effect of destroying the cohesion of the *sreni-mukhyas*, and thereby lower their status and weaken them.

The *Mbh* (12.37.14), however, declares :

*jati-sreny-adhivasanam*  
*kula-dharmams=ca sarvatah*  
*varjayanti ca ye dharmam*  
*tesam dharmo no vidyate*

('There can be no penance [lit. religion] for one who has given up the duty of his caste, *sreni*, locality, and family'.)

The *dharmo* of *jati* etc. here has a wide connotation. Manu (8.41) says :

*jati-janapadan dharman*  
*sreni-dharmams=ca dharmavit*  
*samiksya kula-dharmams=ca*  
*sva-dharmam pratipadayet*

('The king should establish law [*dharmā*] after ascertaining the customs [*dharmā*] of caste, *janapada* (country), *sreni* and *kula* [family].

*Adhivasa* of *Mbh* (12.37.14) which we have rendered as 'locality' seems to stand for *janapada* of *Manu*.

Gautama (11.21) says :

'Cultivators, traders, herdsmen, moneylenders and artisans have authority to lay down regulations for their respective classes'.

Yajñavalkya (1.30) and Narada (1.7) state that law-suits may be decided by village-councils (*kulani*) guilds (*sreni*), assemblies (*puga* in Yajñavalkya and *gana* in Narada), the judges appointed by the king and by the king himself, in succeeding scale of superiority. According to Brihaspati, 'the heads of *kula* (families), *sreni* (guilds), *ganas* and the inhabitants of towns (*pura*) and forts (*durga*) may pronounce the two punishments of reprimand and condemnation against wrong-doers and may also ex-communicate them, and the punishment and favours declared by them according to rules should be approved by the king, since such power is regarded by the sages as delegated to them'. Elsewhere Brihaspati states 'that the *kulas*, *srenis* and *ganas* that are wellknown to the king may decide the disputes of litigants except those that fall under *sahasa* (crime involving force) and that it was only the king who could carry out the order for fines or corporal punishments, i.e., the arbitration courts could only decide disputes not involving *sahasa* and they had no power to execute their decrees about fines and corporal punishments, but that their decisions had to be filed with the king, who, if he did not disapprove of them, put them into execution'. Brihaspati further states that 'in disputes among husbandmen, craftsmen (carpenters and the like), artisans (like painters), moneylenders, guilds, dancers, sectarians (like Pasupatas) and criminal tribes the decision should be made with the help of those who understand the conventions made by them and their usages'.<sup>15</sup>

Whether these regulations had the force of law in the epic age may be questioned. But the statement in *Mbh* (12.37.14) illustrates the

rigour of *sreni-dharma* of that age, which taken together with Gautama (11.21) and Manu (8.41) positively indicate the mandatory nature of the customs obtaining in a guild. The traditions established in the epic age shall have been accepted as customary law by later *Dharmashastra* writers.

## 6. Markets

In the *Mbh* (13.24.22) Bhishma tells Yudhisthira:

*rnakarta ca yo rajan*  
*yas=ca vardhusiko narah*  
*prani-vikraya-vrttis=ca*  
*rajan n=arhanti ketanam*

(O king, [a *brahmana* who is] a debtor, an usurer, or who [makes undue profit] by buying low and selling high should not be invited).

Manu (3.180-81) also forbids one to make gifts to *brahamans* who are engaged in trade or usury as well as to other delinquents. From these it appears that though the *brahmanas* may have been kept off from these lucrative ventures, others took full advantage of a rising market and made investments, whenever, it appeared profitable. As Marx has said: 'To buy cheap in order to sell dear is the rule of trade',<sup>16</sup> and the literal meaning of *prani-vikraya-vriti* is 'buying low and selling high'.

Bhimasena put it forcefully<sup>17</sup>:

*arthena tu samo n=artho*  
*yatra labhyeta n=odayah*  
*na tatra vipanah karyah*  
*khara-kanduyanam hi tat* 3.34.64

('A sale [or investment] is useless unless it is profitable. Otherwise it is like scratching an ass.'<sup>18</sup>)

Conditions were favourable for commercial operations. In any well-ordered kingdom, the merchants were assured of protection, and they flocked there from all countries. The standard description of a prosperous city is that merchants from many countries lived there. This is found in the description of Ayodhya (1.5.14), as well as in the description of Indraprastha, and it is added that they spoke all languages. (1.199.37). This is a sign of an international market; but

in those days when India was divided into many kingdoms, international trade primarily meant all-India trade, though references to sea voyages indicate that trade with countries outside the subcontinent was also contemplated. Vidura is stated to have once spoken to the Pandavas in the Mleccha language (1.135.6). *Mleccha* is a vague term, and can denote any foreigner, but it is apparent that even princes picked up foreign languages, possibly for the same reason which led the Europeans to learn the languages of the countries which they tried to exploit.

Traders from various countries speaking in different languages is described in the *Kuvalayamala*, a Jaina text written in A.D. 779. The scene is set in Soparaka, modern Sopara near Bombay, and the work notes speakers from Magadha, Kira, Dakka (Punjab), Sindh, Marwar, Gurjara, Malwa, Lata, Karnataka, Taie (Tajika, Arab), Kosala, Maharashtra, Andhra, Khasas, Parasas (Persians), and Barbaras. There were also the Gollas who were most probably the same as *gomins* mentioned above.<sup>19</sup>

The *Kuvalayamala* also states, that there was in Sopara a *vaniya-meli* which has been rendered as "Traders' Association" or "Club", where the traders from other parts of the country narrated their experience, and received a farewell symbolized by the gifts of *gandha*, *malya*, and *tambula*. Foreign traders reported their sales and purchase to the 'Association'.<sup>20</sup>

It may be looking too far into the future, and rather presumptuous to expect that trade was as much organized in the epic age as it was at the end of the 8th century A.D. But the indications are that posterity owed not a little to the past generations, and, for all we know, the mechanism of the trade organizations may have been quite developed in the ancient age described by the epics.

The *Ram* while describing the foundation of Takshasila and Puskalavata by Bharata, states that both the cities were full of gardens, vehicles, and 'divided into many markets' (*suvibhakt-antarapane* 7.91.12). Describing the city by the demon Maya, *Mbh* (8.24.17) says that it was *guna-prasava-sambadham*, which has been explained as 'full of the produce of all the *gunas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajah* and *tamo*, which means that the town catered for the needs of all kinds of people'.<sup>21</sup>

Describing Balarama's pilgrimage the way is described as:

*vipany-apanā-panyanam*  
*nana-jana-satair-vrtah*

(9.34.28)

Nilakantha explains *vipani* as *panya-vithika* (road or row of shops, a market row), and *apanā* as *hatta* (market) and *panyani* as *vikraya-dravyani* (merchandise for sale). These were, one might say, the insignia of a prosperous city. Even an army on march was accompanied with shops (*Ram*, 7.56.3; *Mbh* 5.149.53, 5.196.18-19). With the growth of population even sacred places became cities (*tirthani nagarayante*, 9.36.41).

### 7. Imports

Of the articles of import, horses seem to have been one of the most important items. It is also likely that the epics being concerned mainly with warfare, greater prominence was given to horses than to other articles. The *Ram* (1.6.20) speaks of horses from Kamboja, Bahlika, Vanayu, and from a river, by which probably Sindhu or Indus is meant.

From the *Mbh* it is found that horses came from various countries, namely, Kamboja, Bahlika, Sindhu, Vanayu, Mahi, Aratta, and Kuluta; there were also horses bred near river, and horses from forests and mountains.<sup>22</sup> The *Mbh* seems to distinguish between *ajaneya* (well-bred) horses from mountain horses (*parvatiya*) and those bred near rivers (*nadiya*) and Nilkantha has explained these terms in detail (7.79.8). Nilkantha has also described the Saindhava and the Bahlika horses, and compared their respective merits.

Of the countries mentioned above, Kamboja, was Afghanistan, and Bahlika was the country beyond Sutlej and the Indus (8.30.10-11). The Vanayu horses also mentioned in the *Raghuvansam* 5.73 has been explained as Persian horses by Mallinatha, but according to the *Vacaspatya*, Vanayu meant Arabia. Kuluta was the Kulu subdivision in the Kangra valley.

It is interesting to note that according to Kautilya (2.30.29) the best horse came 'from Kamboja, Sindhu, Aratta and Vanayu, the middling from Bahlika, Papeya, Sauvira and Titala', while the rest were inferior. The *Mbh* (6.86.4) mentions *tittirija* horses, which cannot be identified, hence the question has arisen whether it could have referred to Kautilya's Titala horses.<sup>23</sup>

The *Ram* (1.6.21) mentions elephants from the Vindhya and the Himalayas. The *Mbh* mentions elephants from Kalinga (7.68.32) and Aparanta (8.27.9). Assam was also famous for elephants, for the elephant of Bhagadatta, king of Pragjyotisa, is very highly spoken of (7.25.19 ff. and 7.26.3.8).

An idea of the typical products of the various countries can be obtained from Duryodhana's description of the gifts received by Yudhishthira in his *Rajasuya* ceremony. Woollen clothes, cloth made of cat's hair and embroidered with golden threads, cloaks, skins of antelopes, horses, she-camels, and mules came from Kamboja. From Broach came skins of *ranku* deer. Various tribes from the trans-Indus region living near the sea sent sheep, cows, gold, asses, camels, honey made from fruits, and varieties of blankets. The king of Pragjyotisa sent many horses. Some other tribes including the Romakas brought asses which could travel great distance. The Cinas, Hunas, Sakas, Udras, and mountain tribes also brought asses. From Bahlika and Cina also came woollens made of the hairs of *ranku* deer, and pure silk. From Aparanta and other western countries came weapons (2.47.1-24).

It may be stated here that from the *Mbh* (2.23.19) it appears that Cina was in Assam.

Some tribes brought mules, and honey from the Himalayas. Some other tribes brought sandal, aguru (fragrant aloe), skins, jewels, incense, various beautiful objects, and foreign animals and birds (2.48.1-12).<sup>24</sup>

It emerges from the above list that the main articles of import were :

1. Animals : horses, asses, and mules.
2. Woollens
3. Incense
4. Gold and precious stones.

It is important to note that the China silk was reputed not to contain any cotton or wool (*vastram akarpasam avikam*), but was very polished and soft. Apparently China in Assam was the only place in India where silk was produced in those days. Woollen goods came mostly from outside.

Blankets were put to various uses, and it is stated that Duryodhana erected near the Ganges 'houses' that is, tents made of



cloth and blankets (*caila-kambala-vesmani* 1.119.29). Possibly here *kambala* means a carpet or a rug spread on the floor.

Mules are spoken of at many places, and it is said that at the time of Arjuna's marriage with Subhadra, Kṛṣṇa presented him with black, and white mules (1.213.43). These animals were used principally for drawing carts. Carts drawn by oxen, asses, and camels carried Balarama's baggage (9.34.19). A mule-drawn carriage seems to have been highly prized, for Bhisma says that a person, who presents a *brahmana* with a pair of shoes, obtains, in the next birth, a bright chariot drawn by mules (13.65.3). It may be added here that bulls were used from the Vedic times to draw the plough, and in the *Mbh* (13.65.49) Bhisma forbids Yudhishthira to give bulls to a *kinasa*, which has been explained above.

There were also chariots for sports (*krida-ratha*), and chariots for war (*sangramika-ratha*, 13.53.27). These were presumably drawn by horses.

It may be stated here that India imported horses practically throughout her history. Regarding the other imported commodities, it is found in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, written about the first century A.D., that India still imported various kinds of textiles and metals, though the variety of imports had naturally multiplied. Secondly, the *Mbh* does not give an exhaustive list of imports as the *Periplus* does.

### 8. Transport

Travelling in those days may not have been very risky for pilgrims and others. But there were chances of merchants being robbed, and as we have seen, the *Mbh* 12.88.11 and Manu 7.127 while calculating cost takes into account not only the transport charges (*adhvanam*) but cost of protection (*vogaksema*) as well. This protection was afforded by caravans (*sartha*) under a leader (*sartha-vaha*). This was an organized trade as known from other sources.

In the *Mbh*, a description of a caravan is found in the *Nalopakhyaṇa* of the *Vana-parvan*. After Nala had left Dāmayanti, the forlorn queen roamed hither and thither in search of her husband. As Monier Williams has translated it:

'Many a tree she stood and gazed on,

many a river passed she o'er;  
 Passed she many a pleasant mountain,  
 many a wild deer, many a bird;  
 Many a hill and many a cavern,  
 many a bright and wondrous stream,  
 Saw king Bhima's wandering daughter<sup>25</sup>  
 as she sought her husband lost.  
 Long she roamed her weary journey,  
 Damayanti with sweet smile  
 Lo, a caravan of merchants,  
 (*dadars=atha maha-sartham*)  
 elephants, and steeds, and cars,  
 (*hasty-asva-ratha-sankulam*)  
 Passing o'er a pleasant river,  
 with its waters cool and clear. (3.61.104-107)<sup>26</sup>

The caravan had evidently travelled across perilous route under their leader who is called *sartha-vaha* (3.61.117, 121, 124), and in 3.61.121 he is described as *sarthasya mahatah prabhuh*, while in the next verse he describes himself as *aham sarthasya neta*. ('I am the leader of the caravan'.) This indicates that the *sartha-vaha* was the owner of an organization which provided transport facilities including, guards. It is known from Gupta inscriptions, that the *sartha-vahas* had an eminent status, and the chief amongst them played an important civic role.

The particular caravan which Damayanti joined was going to Cedi.<sup>27</sup> At night, however, a band of wild elephants attacked the sleeping caravan and killed most of the merchants. But Damayanti managed to reach Chedi accompanied with a few *brahmanas* learned in the *Vedas* (3.62.17). It is not clear as to what the *brahmanas* were doing in the caravan whose professed aim was profit (*labha*, 3.61.125). The merchants who joined a caravan were called *sarthikas* (3.62.8), and in 12.150.5, they are called *sarthika vanijah*, and it is indicated that they also had to take shelter in forests.

The *Ram* (2.76.8) refers to merchants who brought jewels from overseas country (*samudra*) and further on (4.16.22) refers to an overburdened ship tossing in the sea. In the *Mbh* there are several references to sea-voyages undertaken by merchants, but it appears that it was considered hazardous. When the Pandava soldiers began to run

away, being attacked by Bhagadatta's elephants, they are compared with 'merchants in the stormy sea' (*vanig-jananam ksubhito yath=arnavah* 7.25.56).

After the death of Abhimanyu, Arjuna is said to have wept as a merchant whose ship has foundered (*evain vilapya vahudha bhinnapoto vanig yatha*, 7.50.44). At a critical moment in the war, Karna is described as the island, which provides refuge to the sailors whose boat has sunk (8.55.71-72). The Kaurava soldiers overwhelmed by Arjuna's assault are compared to a great ship struck by a furious gale in the ocean (*mahavata-samaviddha maha-naur=iva sagare*, 8.58.14). When Dhrstadyumna was saved from Karna by Draupadi's sons and taken on their chariot, Dhrstadyumna is compared to a merchant whose ship has sunk but is safely taken aboard another vessel (8.60.22).

After Karna's death, Krpacharya, while advising Duryodhana to come to terms with the Pandavas said: 'O king, Arjuna is making your soldiers shake [as impetuously as] ships are lashed by wind to roll and pitch violently in the ocean'. (9.3.29). Describing the condition of the Kaurava soldiers after Salva's death, Sanjaya compares them with merchants whose ship has sunk in ocean, but who wishes to cross it and reach a place of safety (9.18.2).

An example of misfortune is the fate of the merchant who, having crossed the sea and amassed a fortune, sinks in a small river due to his negligence.

*tirtva samudram vanijah samrddha  
magnah kunadyam iva helamanah* 10.10.23.

These allusions clearly indicate that sea-voyage was not only known but also undertaken, though it was considered to be extremely risky. It is also probable that the *Mbh* was composed in North India, far away from sea, and its author or authors, like most men who have never seen the sea, considered it to be full of peril. It is also true that a voyage in those days, and long after, was dangerous, and only the most intense desire for profit would induce men to undertake a voyage. The passages quoted above also show that only the merchants undertook a sea voyage.

Going to sea was linked with earning a fortune; even a visit to the sea shore was expected to yield some money (12.165.10). Elsewhere

it is said:

*vanig yatha samudrad vai  
yath-artham labhate dhanam  
tatha marty-arnave jantoh  
karma-vijnanato gatih*<sup>28</sup> (12.287.26)

(‘Just as an overseas merchant makes profit in proportion to his investment, so in the sea of life a person attains progress according to his action and knowledge’.)

There was some social stigma attached to a *brahmana* going overseas. For it is said:

*ahvayaka devalaka  
naksatra grama-yajakah  
ete brahmana candala  
maha pathika-pancamah* (12.77.8).

(‘A *brahmana* [who acts as an usher in a court of law, a temple-priest, an astrologer, and a village priest are *candalas* [and so is] a *maha-pathika* the fifth.]

*Maha-pathika* has been explained by commentators as ‘*dvipantara vanija*’, that is, a merchant who goes overseas. This is the earliest known prohibition of sea voyage. At a later age, this dictum was completely ignored and learned *brahmanas* freely went to South-East Asian countries and spread there the message of Indian culture. But later again a reaction set in, and not only the *brahmanas*, but even the *vaisyas* refused to venture outside India. This total abstention was not intended by the *Mbh*, but it may have supplied the original impetus towards the retrograde step.

In the *Mbh* the story of *Ram* is briefly related. In course of the story, it is said that when it came to the crossing of the sea with his army, Ramachandra said to Sugriva: ‘We do not have sufficient vessels to cross the sea, and how can a man like me cause loss to the merchants [by commandeering their boats]. (3.267.28). From this statement it seems that the State in those days did not possess any ship, but the merchants owned them, probably in considerable number. There could have been brisk coastal trade, with Ceylon, and with the countries in the Persian Gulf region.

Manu does not forbid eating fish, and the epics show that the fish was an article of food even for the *brahmanas*. The earliest seafarers, therefore, were probably the coastal fishermen, who, even today, venture miles into the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal in their tiny crafts.

However, the epics merely allude to sea-voyages, particularly its attendant dangers. It does not give a single story of a voyage such as are found in the *jatakas* or in the *Brhatkatha*. There is also no reference to a navy. Taking together all these considerations, it appears that sea voyage was at its early stage during the epic age, and ships carried only a small part of its trade. The main export route was through Kamboja, that is, Afghanistan. It is possible that all the objects which were labelled 'Kamboja' were not really produced in that country, but came through it. The main overland route to India lay through Afghanistan, so all imports coming by the overland route had to come through Afghanistan and usually the Khyber or the Bolan Pass. During the epic age, and long afterwards, these were Hindu territories and as much a part of India as Pakistan and Bangladesh were before 1947.

### 9. Internal Trade

In the *Mbh* 12.69.28, *Bhisma* says to Yudhishthira:

*akare lavane sulke*  
*tare nagavane tatha*  
*nyased amatyan nrpatih*  
*svaptan va parusan hitan*

('The king should have ministers or trusted officials [to collect the taxes from] mines, salt, ferry (*sulka*=*ghattadi deya*), *tara* (freight) and elephant forests'.)

It is evident, therefore, that the mines, salt trade, ferry boats, and elephants were handled by private traders. According to Kautilya, all minds were state property, but the state was not to work all of them. Kautilya's advice was that a light mine should be worked directly by the state and 'a mine that is burdensome in point of expense or working' should be leased out' (2.12.22). But as regards the salt-mines Kautilya's intention was to lease them out on a profit-sharing basis (2.12.28).

Kautilya lay down that 'the Controller of Shipping should look

after activities concerning sea voyages and ferries at the mouth of rivers, as well as ferries over natural lakes, artificial lakes and rivers...Traders shall pay a part (of the goods) as duty...He [Controller of Shipping] should demand *sulka* [duty] from ships sailing on sea when they come within the domain...*Brahmanas*, wandering monks, children, old persons, sick persons, carriers of royal edicts, and pregnant women should cross with a sealed pass stamped with the seal of the Controller of Shipping (2.28.1,4,11 and 18).

It is evident that in Kautilya's time sea-borne trade had become common, but, as stated above, conditions were different in the age of the epics. Hence *sulka* in the *Mbh* (12.69.28) should be taken to mean 'ferry dues', which was the regular meaning of the term. Regarding the persons exempted from paying ferry dues, Manu (8.407) also says that 'women with two months' pregnancy, wandering monks, *brahmanas* and *brahmacharins* will not have to pay ferry dues.' This rule may be expected to have operated in the epic age.

From Kautilya 2.31.1 and 2.31.8 it appears that the elephant-forests were guarded by royal officers and they captured the wild elephants. Here again the *Mbh* differs from Kautilya, and allows the king only a duty on the captured elephants.

### 10. Industry

Trade and commerce depended to a large extent on the industrial produce. The relation between trade and industry has been considered above, and here only the industries mentioned in the epics will be noted.

The *Ram* does not specifically refer to any industry, but from the various descriptions, it is evident that there were flourishing industries, particularly in textiles and metals.

In the *Mbh* the metal industry is referred to several times. *Ayasa* (iron) is mentioned many times, and *krsanayasa* more than once (5.133.1 etc.). But as these words are used metaphorically, it is not possible to be certain that any distinction was intended, specially when it is remembered that adjectives are often added to suit the exigencies of metre. However, it may be pointed out that *ayas* is mentioned in the Vedic literature, but it seems to mean both bronze and iron, while iron was called *karsnayasa* (black-metal) and copper *lohayasa* or *lohitayasa*.<sup>29</sup> In the *Mbh*, however, *ayasa* means iron, and the use of

the word *tamra* for copper is also found. The *kamsyayasa tanutrara* (armour made of bell-metal) is mentioned in the *Mbh* (7.31.17). The *Ram* (1.36.19) mentions *tamra* and *karsnayasa* (iron).

While explaining polity, Bhisma says (12.120.19).

‘In speaking about anything (*vaktavye*) one should be prudent and conceal one’s thought. As a result (*tatha*), the other party, even if he be wise and like Brhaspati in intellect,—will give out (*vaksyate*) the thoughts nearest to his heart and reveal his nature, like red hot iron (which becomes black) when immersed in water (*krsnayasam iv=odake*)’.<sup>30</sup>

The allusion here is definitely to a smithy. This is confirmed by a later verse which says:

*yatha lohasya nihsyando  
nisikto bimba-vigraham  
upaiti tad vijanihi  
garbhe jiv-opapadanam* (14.18.8)

(‘Know that a *jiva* takes shape inside the womb, as molten iron takes the shape of the mould into which it is poured.

Thus it is evident that both forging and casting of metals were practised.

Hot iron had another use. It is said :

*manasena hi duhkhena  
sariram upatapyate  
ayah-pindena taptena  
kumbha-samstham iv=odakam* (3.2.25)

(‘Mental distress inflames the body just as a hot ball of iron [heats] the [cool] water kept in a jar.’)

At present the electric immersion-heaters heat water exactly on this principle. It is quite likely that in ancient age, people used to get hot water for bath by dipping a red hot iron ball in a bucket of water.

Among the articles of use made of iron were, angling hooks (*vadisam, ayasam*, 5.34.13), utensils made of both iron and copper (*ayasmayam tamramayam ca bhandam*, 9.34.31) and it may be presumed that the handcuff (*hastavapa*, 12.174.5),<sup>31</sup> with which the

king was advised to secure an atheist (*nastika*) before turning him out of the country, was also made of iron. The *candalas* wore iron ornaments (*Ram* 1.57.11; *Mbh* 13.48.32, *Manu*, 10.52).

Besides utensils, the chief use of iron was in producing weapons. The *Rgveda* (6.75.15) describes an arrow with a tip, of iron (*yasya ayo mukham*), but in the *Mbh* the entire arrow was made of iron (*adrisara-maya isu*, 7.17.17, *karsnayasair=banaih*, 7.28.4). Other weapons made of iron were *sakti* (spear, *sarvayasim saktim*, 7.13.72; *saktim ayasim*, 7.27.9) *sarvaparasavim saktim* (7.99.18) and *gada* (club, *sarvayasim gadam*, 7.14.4). The qualification 'entirely made of iron' raises the presumption that all the spears and clubs were not entirely of iron. Ordinary lances may have had a wooden shaft with an iron head, and the clubs may have been made of heavy wood with iron spikes.

But arrows entirely made of iron seem to have become common, for in 9.13.1 *ayasa* is used to denote arrow, though in 7.93.3, we hear of *sarvayasah sarah*. But arrows with only iron heads had not gone out of use, and are referred to in 6.112.117-118.

Possibly ordinary arrows still had a wooden or reed shaft, and the all-iron arrows are mentioned to indicate the severity of the fighting. The metal arrows were cleaned, that is polished or sharpened, by smiths (*karmara-parimarjita*, 6.107.45; 6.109.18; 7.47.12; 7.114.40; 7.144.22). It is stated that Arjuna's arrows were stamped with his name (*namankitah*, 7.74.7). If this description is not entirely fanciful, it would indicate considerable technical skill. Use of oil as a lubricant or anti-corrosive seems to be indicated by the term *tailapayin* (7.130.27), which may mean an arrow or a sword.

Iron plates chased with gold were used to fasten the pole or the wooden frame of the carriage of the chariot with the yoke (7.122.78). A more gorgeous iron-plate used in a chariot is described in 7.42.5.

Iron armour was extensively used, and mention is made of *lauhani kavacani* (4.57.4) *ayasmaya-varmanam* (7.43.10; 7.131.53) and of demascene steel (*saikyayasani varmani*, 7.95.35). Armour was also made of bell-metal; *varmani kamsyani* (7.95.35) and *kamsyasatanutrana* (8.59.26) *kamsya-kavaca* (7.150.10) *kamsya-varma* (7.150.24).



The property of loadstone or magnet was known and it is said:

*abhidravaty=ayaskantam*  
*ayo niscetanam yatha*  
*svabhava-hetuja bhava*  
*yad vad anyad ap=idrsam* (12.204.3)

('Just as an inert [piece of] iron moves towards a magnet, so does the natural instincts of a man [like nescience, desire, etc.] are attracted [towards the *jiva* or *purusa*'])

It is, however, not possible to say as to whether the magnet was put to any useful purpose. The use of files for cutting iron also seems to have been known (12.205.27). An iron hammer or forge hammer (*ayoghana*) is referred to in 7.25.58.<sup>32</sup>

There were machines for throwing iron balls. These catapults are referred to as *ayah-kanapa* (*Mbh* 1.218.24), and propulsion of objects by a machine (*yantra-nirmukta*) is referred to in 7.67.68 and 7.68.65. Machines for throwing stones and arrows are also mentioned in the *Ram* (6.3.11): *isupala-yamrani*, which were placed on the ramparts of Lanka. It seems that the *yantras* which were erected on buildings of Lanka (6.3.15) served the same purpose. The city of Ayodhya was similarly provided for (*sarva-yantra-yudha-vatim*, 1.5.10). In the *Mbh*'s version of *Ram*, Ravana's city is said to have been provided with *karnatta-yantra durdharsa* (3.268.4 and 29-30).

The *sataghni* is mentioned as a weapon in the *Ram* (1.5.11) and in the *Mbh* many times. Indraprastha, the Pandava capital, was guarded with *sataghnis* and other machines (*sataghnibhir = vantrajalais - ca sobhitam*, 1.199.33), and this was also Bhishma's advise (12.69.43). But it appears that the *sataghni* could be discharged by one man, for, it is said: 'The king of Sindhu [hurled] *pattisa* (a kind of spear) and *tomara* (a javelin). Kṛpa, the *sataghni* and Salya [discharged] an arrow.' (6.109.35): but Bhimasena destroyed the *sataghni* with nine arrows (6.107.38). The *sataghni* is mentioned along with many other weapons in 7.113.20 and 7.154.46, one of which could project an iron ball, and later the *sataghni* is said to throw fire (*hutasudah*, 7.170.19). Arjuna's arrows are compared with *musala* (mace), *parigha* (an iron club studded with iron), *satagham* and thunder (8.21.32). When the Pandavas, attacked Salya, it is said that Nakula hurled a *sakti* (spear), Sahadeva a *gada* (club), and Yudhisthira a *sataghni* which Salya cut down with

two arrows (9.12.23-24).<sup>33</sup> It is difficult to say what the *sataghm* was, and though it is sometimes held to have been a fire-arm the commentators have explained it as a huge stone studded with iron spikes. It was possibly some simple contrivance like a sling or a catapult, which could be used in battle, and was also used for defensive purposes.<sup>34</sup>

The only use of a machine for peaceful use was the one made by a carpenter and used by him (12.34.10).

The epics are mainly concerned with war, so the descriptions of weapons predominate. Still it is difficult not to conclude that the metal industry was mainly, or at least in a great part, engaged in the production of weapons. In that case it may be postulated that the production of weapons, reached its peak just before the Bharata war followed by a 'slump'. Except for the *Asvamedha* sacrifice, performed just after the war, no other war is reported during the thirty-six years of Yudhishthira's reign. This 'era of peace' could have impoverished the craftsmen engaged in the production of weapons, which could have adversely affected the social status of the metal workers. But details are not available.<sup>34a</sup>

Leather industry was also fairly developed. The *Mbh* (13.97 to 98) describes the invention of shoe and umbrella to protect the sage Jamadagni's wife Renuka. The story seems to indicate that these aids to human comfort were first invented to protect the ladies. But men soon took advantage of the new invention, and Bhishma relates to Yudhishthira the great merits acquired by those who made gifts of umbrella and shoes to a *brahmana* (13.98.17-21).

Leather must have been mainly used in the manufacture of shoes, but it was put to other uses also. Nakula kept his weapons in a bag made of goat or sheep skin (*panca-nakhe kose*, 4.38.57) while Sahadeva sheathed his sword in a scabbard made of cow hide (*gavya-kose*, 4.38.58).

Water-bottles or water bags were called *drti* (12.232.14). The word also occurs in Manu (2.99) where Medhatithi explains it as 'bags made of goat's skin etc. for carrying water.'<sup>35</sup>

There were also ropes made of leather (*sata-carma*, *Mbh.*, 1.26.19). It is interesting to note that the *Brhatkatha* describes mountain

climbing with the aid of ropes made of skin. In the *Mbh* also the rope made of skin is given as an example of great strength. Usually, it seems that ropes were made of hemp as well as of bark of trees (*sana-valka*) as is stated in the *Ram* (5.46.45; 5.56.129).

### 11. Money

The *Ram* mentions coins only a few times. It is said that Ramachandra distributed among *brahmanas* *trimsat-koti-hiranya* (thirty crores of *hiranya*, 6.116.55), from which it is apparent that *hiranya* was a coin. When sending Satrugna on an expedition, Ramachandra gave him one million (*niyuta*) of *suvarna hiranya* (gold *hiranya*, 7.56.4). *Hiranya* also can mean gold, but as a coin it was evidently not always a gold coin. Actually in the *Ram* (1.73.5; 7.85.15) and in the *Mbh* (13.57.34), the word *hiranya* seems to have been used in the sense of silver. Therefore, *hiranya*, which is also mentioned in the *Mbh* (3.183.30) as a coin, appears to have been usually a silver coin but gold *hiranyas* were also issued. The *Ram* (2.64.18) mentions *rukmaniska*, that is, golden *niska*, as a coin. In the *Mbh* (2.30.51) *rukma* seems to have been used in the sense of a gold coin, rather than gold.

The confusion in terminology is due to the fact that it was the practice in the epic age to use—particularly while making a gift—both coined and uncoined gold. The *Mbh* mentions *krt-akṛta kanaka* (1.213.46) and *krt-akṛtam ca kanakam* (13.53.39), which has been explained by an anonymous commentator as *ghatit aghatitam kanakam* (made or unmade gold) that is, coined or uncoined gold.

But the coin more frequently mentioned in the *Mbh* is the *niska*, and its connotation is even more confusing than that of *hiranya*. We have seen that in the *Ram*, *niska* is mentioned once, when it is qualified by *rukma* (gold). In the *Mbh*, the word *niska* is used at least 35 times, of which it is used (i) six times as gold, (ii) eleven times as gold ornaments, mostly necklace, (iii) nine times as coin, (iv) five times as a gold coin, (v) while four times the word is used in such a manner that it may mean either gold or coin.<sup>36</sup>

The variations in the meaning of *niska* arose in the Vedic times. Gold was known as *niska*, and when it was coined, the coin was also known as *niska*; and *niska* also meant a gold ornament—particularly a necklace. *Niska* is used in the *Rgveda* and later Vedic literature denoting a gold ornament worn on the neck as is shown by the two

epithets *niska-kantha* (*Aitareya Brahmana*, VIII. 22) and *niska-griva* (*Rgveda*, V, 19.3, *Atharvaveda*, V, 17.14), meaning 'having a gold ornament on the neck'. The epithets *niska-kanthi* (8.27.5; 13.106.29) and *niska-kantha* (13.106.33) are also used in the *Mbh*.

*Niska* was, however, or seems to have been, used even in the *Rgveda* as a coin (1.126.2), while in later Vedic literature its use to denote a coin is more abundant and clear.

Manu (8.284) mentions *niska* as a coin, but it is difficult to ascertain whether he means a gold or silver coin; Medhatithi explains *niska* as a 'measure of gold', but it is difficult to say how far he is correct. In the *Kumarasambhavam* (2.49), *niska* has been used to mean a gold necklace, while the *Bhagavat* (4.3.6) uses the phrase *niska-kanthi*. But in a much later work, namely, the *Dvyasraya-kavya* of Hemachandra, written in the 12th century A.D., *niska* has been used to mean a gold coin, which, according to the commentator, weighed 108 *palas*. However, in his dictionary, *Abhidhana-cintamanj*, (*Bhumikhanda*, 4.10), Hemachandra has given *niska* as a synonym of gold. Bhaskaracharya in his *Litavati* states, that 20 *varatakas* make 1 *kakini*, 4 *kakinis* make 1 *pana*, 16 *panas* make 1 *dramma*, and 16 *drammas* make 1 *niska*.<sup>37</sup> It is evident, therefore, that from the Vedic times onwards, the word *niska* has been used in a dual sense: to indicate a coin and also as a measure of gold.

The epics do not mention any other coin, except that the *Mbh* mentions the *kakini* once (12.282.16) as a coin of the smallest denomination, and Nilakantha explains it as 20 *varatikas*.

It may therefore be concluded, that the use of coins was known in the epic age, and that there was a gold coin. It is surprising, however, that Kautilya does not mention any gold coin. His regulation regarding coinage is (2.12.24): 'The Mint Master should cause to be minted silver coins with one-fourth part copper (and) containing as hardening alloy one *masa* (in weight) of one of the following (*viz.*), iron, tin, lead, and antimony of the denomination of) 1 *pana*, 1 half *pana*, a quarter *pana*, and a one-eighth *pana*: (further) copper coins with one-quarter sustenance (of an alloy), (of the denomination of), one *masaka*, a half *masaka*, a *kakani*, and a half *kakani*.'<sup>38</sup> Most probably the *kakani* mentioned in the *Mbh* (12.282.16) was a copper coin.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the authors of the epics knew

of a gold and a copper coin. The silence of the epics regarding a silver coin does not preclude the possibility of its use, but it is remarkable that the epics seldom mention silver, while they mention gold frequently. This peculiarity may partly be due to the fact, that there is an element of exaggeration in the epics, and everything had to be of gold in order to be impressive. Alternatively, it is also possible that in those days gold was more abundant than silver.

It is quite possible that in the epic age minting was not a State monopoly, and the kings minted coins on special occasions. While commenting on *astapada-padasthane laksamudreva laksyate* (12.287.38), Nilakantha says that the reference is to a gold *karsapana* which had eight marks upon it. This description reminds one of the punch-marked coins. But Nilakantha is a very late commentator, his date having been assigned to A.D. 1650-1700.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to say as to how far one can rely on Nilakantha's authority to affirm the existence of punch-marked coins in the epic. On the other hand, the origin of the punch-marked coins has not been satisfactorily explained, and it is quite possible that those were issued in the epic age, and as has been suggested, by the trade guilds. The kings in that case shall have issued only gold coins on ceremonial occasions.

## 12. The Rise of Merchant's Capital

Men after all will be men, hence it is hardly surprising to come across a reference to illegal gain even in the *Rama-rajya*, where Ramachandra compares the scorching rays of the midday sun to the rudeness displayed by men, who have gained money by dishonest means (*amargena*, 3.7.8). In the *Mbh* (5.39.52), Vidura says that a *sraddha* ceremony performed 'with illegally earned money' (*adharma-oparjitair-arthaih*) produces no result.

In the *Parasara-gita*, the sage praises the wealth acquired legally and denounces illegally earned money (*Mbh* 12.281.4-5, 12.283.24), but he points out that due to greed a man adopts illegal means to acquire wealth, presumably because his status in society depends on his affluence (12.284.7-9).

The type of people who made illegal gains is not specified; they could have been officials or traders. Here one is reminded of Kautilya's estimation of the moral of the officials. He says (2.9.32-33): 'Just as it is not possible not to taste honey or poison placed on the surface of

the tongue, even so it is not possible for one dealing with the money of the king not to taste the money in however small a quantity. Just as fish moving inside water cannot be known when drinking water, even so officers appointed for carrying out works cannot be known when appropriating money.<sup>40</sup>

There is no means of knowing as to how far the conditions were different in the epic age, but if all the epic officials had been men of sterling character, it is evident that by the end of the 4th century B.C., when Kautilya wrote, the tradition of honesty was lost. As for the traders, there is a distinct reference in the *Mbh* to their using false weights (*kuta-manair=vanijah*, 1.58.22). This practice was known to Kautilya who lays down (4.2.20): As to difference in weight or measure, or difference in price or quality, for the weigher or measurer who by a trick of the hand brings about (a difference to the extent of) one-eighth part in (an article) priced at one *pana*, the fine is two hundred (*panas*).<sup>41</sup>

Manu deprecates trade because it does not discriminate between truth and falsehood (*saty-anrtam tu vanijyam*, 4.6); and here the commentators include moneylending within the meaning of *vanijya*. Manu's dictum may have induced Amara to give *saty-anrita* as a synonym for trade while he gives *anrta* as a synonym for agriculture (*Amarakosa*, *Vaisya-vargah*, 4.8), possibly following a doubtful verse of the *Ram* (Vulgate edition, 7.74.17), not included in the Critical Edition).

As noted above, the *Mbh* (13.24.22) denounces the *brahmana* who follows the *prani-vikraya-vrtti*, which means 'buying low and selling high'. Possibly Kautilya had this type of trade in mind when he laid down (4.2.19): 'For traders, who by conspiring together hold back wares or sell them at a high price, the fine is one thousand *panas*'. Kautilya (4.2.28) imposes a fine of 1000 *panas* on *karus* (artisans) and *silpins* (artists) who conspire either to bring about a deterioration in the quality of their products or increase prices too high. Kautilya (4.2.22) also provides for punishing the adulterators of grains, fats (oil and *ghī*), sugar, salt, perfumes and medicines.

The epics do not mention adulteration, but the negative evidence is hardly conclusive. Manu (8.203) inveighs against adulteration and imposes a fine for over-pricing (9.287). Yajñavalkya (2.245) practically repeats Kautilya 4.2.21, and while the latter imposed a fine of twelve

*panas* on the adulterators. Yajnavalkya prescribed a fine of sixteen *panas*. Yajnavalkya (2.244) also imposes a fine on merchants using false weights, and curiously enough refers, like Kautilya, to the manipulation of one-eighth of the weight. Provisions on the same topic is found in later *Dharmashastras*.

It is difficult to say whether the business morality in ancient India was high or low; apparently the law-givers had left it necessary to provide against dishonest traders and craftsmen. The provisions of the legal codes are not always conducive to a broad spectrum analysis. It is, however, evident that dishonest practices, which are supposed to be modern evils, were not unknown in ancient India, and one may hazard a guess on the basis of the tirade against ill-gotten wealth, that corrupt officials and dishonest traders were not uncommon in the epic age as they are supposed to have been.

The importance of these evidences are that they indicate the operation of market economy in ancient India, though its area of efficient function is most likely to have been limited due to the lack of means of transport. The result was the restrictive and dishonest trade practices condemned by the ancient law-givers. To what extent the trade was controlled or regulated by the government can only be a matter of speculation. The little information that can be obtained about market conditions is from late inscriptions, which show the existence of an office for collecting *sulka* or tax on the commodities sold in a market. Presumably the sellers were left free to manipulate the price so long as they paid their dues.

The caste system fostered the early growth of merchant capitalism in ancient India. The various guilds promoted its development. The *Dharmashastras* protected the interest of the merchants by acknowledging the guild-regulations as part of the law of the land. All these factors combined to promote the growth of merchant's capital which due to peculiar Indian social conditions, became a permanent social institution, and at a later stage in history hampered the growth of capitalist production. As Marx has said: '... the independent development of merchant's capital, is inversely proportional to the degree of development of capitalist production...' <sup>42</sup>

## REFERENCES

1. It may be argued that all that Yudhishthira donated was the king's share

of the revenue and other rights of the king. But that does not seem to be the intention. For later when Yudhisthira gave Vyasa a large amount of gold in exchange for the returned kingdom, it is stated that the gold was the price of the land (*dharanya niskrayam*) (14.91.22).

2. Apparently only the *srotriyas* (*brahmanas* learned in the *Veda*) was exempt from taxation. A *brahmana* engaged in agriculture was not free from taxation according to Brhaspati quoted by Apararka cited by P.V. Kane. *History of Dharmashastra*, II, p. 126, f.n. no. 275.
3. The simile is very appropriate, because Sita is the daughter of Vasundhara.
4. The wretched condition of a *brahmana* was aggravated due to the restrictions imposed on him regarding accumulation of wealth or corn. Manu (4.7-8) says that a *brahmana* householder may not accumulate grain more than sufficient to fill a *kusula* (granary), or a *kumbhi*, nor can he possess more corn than is sufficient to fulfil his needs for more than three days, or (preferably) for the day itself; out of these four modes of accumulation each succeeding one was better than each preceding one, and the *brahmana* who did not bother about hoarding next day's provisions was the best.

The words '*kusula*' and *kumbhi* have been differently explained by commentators. According to Medhatithi one who has money or corn sufficient to fulfil his needs for three years is a *kusula-dhanya*, while *kumbhi-dhanya* refers to a man whose accumulated money and corn would not last for more than six months. Kulluka says that one who has corn sufficient for three years is *kusula-dhanya*, while one who has for one year only is *kumbhi-dhanya*. According to Govindaraja, the two terms denote respectively one who has corn for twelve days and six days. The *Mitaksara* on *Yajnavalkya* 1.128 accepts Govindaraja's explanation.

- 4a. Quotations given by Kishori Mohan Gupta, *The Land System in Vedic Age*, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji Silver Jubilee Volume, Calcutta, 1925, III, p. 533.
5. Quoted by P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, III. p. 419.
6. The idea is that they have no money because they are fools.
7. See for example Yudhisthira's role in the defeat and death of Dronacharya. Explaining *Raja-dharma* to Yudhisthira, *Bhimsa* said: 'One should speak kindly to a person even when wishing to strike him; nay, even in the very act of striking. Having struck him, one should further proceed as if to take pity upon him by weeping and lamenting. 12.103.34.
8. By 'cows' here we mean bulls. Cows are seldom, if ever put to the plough or for drawing a cart, but the word invariably used in the texts in 'go'.
9. Critical Notes on 12.83.36. p. 669.



10. *Gomin* (Panini, 5.2.114) means the owner of cattle or cows. Manu (9.50) has used *gomin* to denote the owner of a cow or a herd of cows as distinct from the owner of a bull. Yajñavalkya (2.161) uses the term *gomin* as owner of a cattle-herd. It does not appear that the *gomins* were *vaisyas* as averred by Nilakantha.
11. Lit. 'By over-milking a state no great work can be done.'
12. Translation by R.P. Kangle.
13. For the explanation of *bhakta*, *yoga-ksema* etc. see Medhatithi and Kulluka on Manu 7.127. According to Medhatithi, the time which lapsed between purchase and sale, and the damage to any article due to its being unsold for a long-time were taken into consideration.  
For explanation of 12.88.12. see Critical Notes by Dr. S.K. Belvalkar.
14. Quoted in Kane, *op. cit.* III, p. 281.
15. Brhaspati quoted, *ibid.*, III, pp. 157, 281 and 284.
16. Karl Marx: *Capital*, English translation, Moscow, 1959, III, p. 324. See also R.H. Tawney: *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, Pelican, 1948, p. 47.
17. Bhimsena urged with equal force the merits of Vedic sacrificial gifts to *brahmanas*.
18. The simile, 'scratching an ass' to signify utter uselessness has been used several times in the *Mbh*. Surapraka is mentioned in the *Mbh*. 2.28.43.
19. *Kuvalayamala*, edited by A.N. Upadhye, Bombay, 1959, L, PP. 152-53.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 65. In this connection see 'The Jain Inscription in the temple of Bajinath of V.S. 1296. G. Buhler who edited the inscription remarked: 'The word *desi* which I have translated by foreman means literally guide instructor. It would seem that the dealers had appointed a manager who acted in their name.' *El*, I, p. 189, f.n. 39. Dr. Upadhye differs from Buhler and suggests that *desi* means a *sreni* or guild of dealers. Marco Polo writes: 'I assure you that these Brahmins are among the best and most trustworthy merchants in the world; for nothing on earth would they tell a lie, and all that they say is true. Indeed you must know that if a foreign trader comes to that province in order to do business, and is ignorant of the customs of the country, he seeks out one of these Brahmin merchants entrusting him with his money and his wares, and begging him, as he does not know the local customs, to look after his business and his merchandise, that he may not be cheated. Then the Brahmin merchant takes in trust the foreign trader's business, and deals with it so honestly, both in buying and in selling, and looks after the stranger's interests with such anxious care, that he could not do better were acting for himself. Nor does he ask for anything in return for what he does, leaving it to the stranger to give him something out of his generosity.' *Macro Polo*,

translated by A. Ricci, edited with an Introduction by Sir Dension Ross, 1931, p. 313. In the *Mbh* (12.121.43), *daisika* has been used to denote guides, who, like the sappers and miners, surveyed and prepared the roads by which the army was to advance.

It is possible that some poor *brahmans* earned their livelihood as brokers to foreign merchants. Being with some education, they would pick up a foreign language more easily than others, and as they were not traders, they would be more dependable and honest. Though this profession was not prohibited it was not recommended either, so whatever they got would have satisfied them.

21. Critical Notes, *Karna-parvan*. 24.17, p. 683.
22. For horses from Bahlika see 5.84.6; 7.35.36; Saindhava 5.45.13; 7.79.8; 7.148.8; 9.7.21; from Kamboja, 6.67.12; 6.68.3; 7.35.36; 8.27.8; 10.13.1; from Vanayu 6.86.4; 7.36.36; 8.62.22, from Gandhara 9.27.43; from Aratta, 6.86.4; riverbred (*nadija*), 6.86.3; 7.79.8; from Mahi, 6.86.3; mountain horses, 6.86.3; 7.36.36; 7.79.8; from Kuluta, 7.79.7.
23. For reference see R.P. Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra*, II, Bombay 1963, p. 198, f.n. 29.
24. Some fanciful gifts such as horses presented by *gandharva* king (2.48.23) have been omitted. We have also omitted the semi-astronomical figures of horses, elephants, asses, etc.
25. Bhima's daughter is Damayanti.
26. *Nalopakhyanam, Story of Nala*. An Improved Version of Dean Milman's Translation by Monier Williams, Oxford, 1879, pp. 77-9.
27. Cedi included Bundelkhand and a part of Madhya Pradesh. Apparently the *Mbh* describes the inhospitable regions of Bundelkhand.
28. *Gati* here means 'the course of the soul through numerous forms of life,' which it is said, depends on the man's knowledge and action, just as a merchant's profit depends on his capital and cleverness.
29. For details see A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects* (1958 Reprint).
30. Tr. by Dr. S.K. Belvalkar, Critical Notes on 12.120.19.
31. *Hastavapo* also meant gloves.
32. The reference is to the Bombay edition; this verse is not included in the critical edition. For *ayoghama* see *Raghuvansam*, 14.33.
33. For other references to *sataghni* see *Mbh*. 3.22.2; 3.268.5; 6.92.57; 6.109.35; and 7.29.16 etc.
34. For *yantra* see also 14.76.26.
- 34a. For the economic consequences of the war see Chapter V. Section 7.
35. *Mbh* 12.232.14<sup>a</sup> and Manu 2.99<sup>d</sup> and identical.

36. (i) Gold: 5.125.10; 7.138.17; 7.129.27; 8.1.12; 8.19.27; 11.17.4.  
(ii) Ornament: 7.91.26; 7.113.21; 7.123.36; 7.117.35; 7.129.27; 7.150.8;  
8.27.5; 8.36.11; 13.106.22; 13.106.29; 13.106.33.  
(iii) Coin: 2.49.15; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.21.10; 12.40.17; 12.45.5; 13.94.26;  
13.105.11; 14.91.7.  
(iv) Gold coin: 3.24.2; 4.36.39; 7.58.17; 7.87.60; 11.18.17.  
(v) Gold or coin: 1.213.62; 5.153.32; 7.16.26; 12.29.117.
37. Quoted in the *Gaudalekhamala*, p. 31.
38. Translation by R.P. Kangle.
39. P.K. Gode: Nilakantha Caturdhara, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, XXIII (1942), pp. 146-61.
40. Translation by R.P. Kangle.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Karl Marx: *Capital*, Moscow, 1959, III, p. 323.

# 12

## The Economic Structure

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### Influence of the Mahabharata

Social security, equitable, distribution of wealth, full employment etc. are modern formulations. Needless to say, none of these concepts were known in ancient India. The social thinking of the ancient Hindus was concerned mainly with social stability, which, as we have seen, they achieved by staggering people at various levels into socio-economic groups. Intra-group mobility was allowed and even encouraged, but so far as group mobility *inter se* was concerned, social immobility would not be a too strong a word for their goal. The dynamism of mutability, confined within each caste, and the transcendental pull of stability balanced and sustained the Hindu society.

The rationale, the caste system may have had at the beginning, was lost by the time of the Bharata War, when the Kaliyuga is said to have begun. A radical change was no longer possible. The caste system had by this time so integrated with the religious system, that in order to go against it one had to repudiate the dogmas of religion and the prevailing systems of philosophy. Only the *nastikas* were prepared to go so far, but they were a minority, and there is no evidence that they ever enjoyed any influence over the mass. The durable existence of the Hindu social system depended primarily on the *brahmanas*, who sacrificed their economic interest and preferred to remain poor.

There were exceptions. In both the epics, there are *brahmana* ministers. Their acceptance of service can be justified on the ground that they had to steer the ship of state according to the dictates of the *Dharmashastras*. But it is not possible to find any explanation except profit motive for the conduct of Drona and Kripa as noted.

### Marriage, Inheritance and Property

Inheritance is an indispensable part of the institution of property, which has been defined by Austin as, 'any right which gives to the entitled party such a power or liberty of using or disposing of the subject .... as is merely limited generally by the rights of all other persons in every civilized society, but here the question of legitimacy arises. For one would have liked to be certain that the children to whom one would leave his property, gained after great toil or handed down by his ancestors, were indeed one's own. Thus inheritance links property with the institution of marriage.' In course of time, all the three institutions, namely, property, inheritance, and marriage acquire a moral and religious sanction. In all societies those actions and habits are approved as moral, which tend to preserve the existing social structure, and the cohesion and conveniences of its members, and promote their material advantages; and those actions and habits which are fraught with contrary tendencies are denounced as immoral.

The picture of the earliest Hindu society is found in the *Vedas*. But there the description is incidental, for the Vedic texts were primarily concerned with religion and philosophy. It is, however, quite clear that even at the earliest Vedic period, the institutions of marriage and private property were in working order. But the reference in the *Vedas* are mainly to the contemporary society, and it is impossible to ascertain from them the condition of the pre-Vedic society. Here the *Mbh* seems to be helpful.

As Pandu became incapable of procreating a child, he asked Kunti to bear him a son by the system known as *niyoga* (levirate). Kunti at first refused to do so, whereupon Pandu related to him an ancient story of the days when there was no restriction imposed on women, and a woman could submit to any man of her choice. One day, the sage Svetaketu, son of the sage Uddalaka, was sitting with his parents, when a *brahmana* came, and, at his requests, Svetaketu's mother left with him, albeit reluctantly. Uddalaka attempted to pacify his outraged son by pointing out that, women, like cows, were uninhibited (*anavṛta*, lit. uninclosed) and free to follow their proclivities. This explanation failed to satisfy Svetaketu, who thereupon ordained that, henceforth free sex would not be permitted to women, and transgressors would be guilty of the sin of abortion; an unmarried girl was to remain a virgin. But the sin of adultery would attach to a

woman who refused to bear a child by a person other than her husband when ordered to do so by the latter (*Mbh*, 1,113.8-26).

There is also the story of the sage Dirghatamas (*Mbh*, 1.98.6-19). While Dirghatamas was in his mother's womb, his uncle (father's brother) forced his mother to relieve him of his concupiscence. Apparently at that age a brother-in-law (*devara*) possessed the right to cohabit with his sister-in-law. This conclusion is supported by the *Nirukta* (3.15), 'where in some mss. the word '*devara*' is explained as 'a second husband' (*dvitīyo varah*),<sup>2</sup> while explaining *Rgveda* X.40.2. An echo of this usage is heard in the statement of the *Mbh* (13.8.22):

*nari tu paty=abhavē vai  
devaram kurute patim*

('In the absence of her husband, a woman takes her brother-in-law as her husband.')

The reference in this particular verse is to a widow, but it might also have applied to a woman whose husband was away.

In the story related above, Pandu also said (1.113.7) that the women of *Uttarakuru*<sup>3</sup> were free in matters of sex. The *Mbh* mentions three other countries where restrictions in matters of sex were lax. It is sated (2.28.23-24) that the women of Mahismati<sup>4</sup> through the favour of Sun-god, did whatever they liked and could not be restrained. Lastly, (8.27.75-91; 8.30.15-88) Karna gave a lurid description of the manners and customs of the women of Madra and Bahlika,<sup>5</sup> from which it appears that utmost licentiousness prevailed in those regions, though Karna's account may not be free from malicious exaggeration.

Thus it becomes difficult to deny that, while the epics were representing the ideal of *pativrata* (virtuous wife), there were 'some regions on the periphery of Aryavarta, where laxness of morals was customary. It is significant that Uttarakuru included the regions where polyandry still prevails.

As stated above, the Vedic literature presents a state of ideal married life, but there are vague references to promiscuity in a former age, as in *Rgveda* X.40.2. In the ritual of Varuna praghasas<sup>6</sup> also, the wife of the sacrificer had to confess if she had any lovers, and even if she confessed to having had one or even more, she was allowed to co-

operate in the sacrifice on undergoing an expiation. In a hymn of the *Rgveda* (X.162.5), reference is made not only to a paramour but to incestuous relation with a brother. The legend of Yama and Yami in the *Rgveda* (X.10) also points to a pre-Vedic age when incest was not uncommon, though this particular legend has another explanation which has nothing to do with sex. However, there is another passage in the *Rgveda* (X.40.2) which refers to a woman taking her brother-in-law to bed, indicating the right of the brother-in-law mentioned above.

It will be observed that though Svetaketu prohibited promiscuity, he introduced the system of *niyoga*, which meant that, with her husband's permission a woman could have relations with another man. This custom was not only abhorrent to later Hindu society, but from early times divergent opinions were expressed about it. Some of the *Dharmashastras* favoured while others condemned the practice.

It may be mentioned here that though the right of *sati* was not practised in the Vedic age, it appears from the *Rgveda* (X.18.8), that 'in hoary antiquity a wife burnt herself alongwith her husband.' This custom seems to have been revived during the epic age where two instances of *sati* are given. Madri burnt herself on the funeral pyre with Pandu (1.116.31) and four wives of Vasudeva also performed the same rite (16.8.24-25). It is possible, therefore, that the Vedic people were not successful in totally suppressing the customs which prevailed in the pre-Vedic society.

It will be recalled that Svetaketu's father explained the wanton behaviour of his wife by comparing her with a cow; but later, as we shall see, the wife is invariably referred to as a *ksetra* (land). This change in terminology indicates change from a nomadic or pastoral life, when cattle was the only form of wealth, to a settled rural life, when land had become the more important form of wealth, being the richest source of production. To the pastoral nomads a herd of cows were the only valuable and permanent form of wealth, and they moved about seeking fresh pasture land and leading a sort of communal life where the herd was the joint property of the community. Marriage in some form must have evolved even then, otherwise Svetaketu could not have identified his father, but marital relations were not strictly observed.

This loose union is comparable to the 'pairing family' discovered by Bachofen, which represents a transitional stage between group marriage and monogamy. As Engels has said, pairing 'is the form of the family characteristic for barbarism, as group marriage is for savagery, and monogamy for civilization. In order to develop it into established monogamy, other causes than those active hitherto were required. In the pairing family the group was already reduced to its last unit, its bi-atomic molecule: one man and one woman. natural selection had accomplished its purpose by a continually increasing restriction of sexual intercourse. Nothing remained to be done in this direction. Unless new social forces became active, there was no reason why a new form of the family should develop out of the pairing family? But these forces did become active....

'... Up to the lower stage of barbarism, fixed wealth was almost exclusively represented by houses, clothing, rough ornaments and the tools for obtaining and preparing food: boats, weapons and household articles of the simplest kind Nourishment had to be secured day by day. But now, with their herds of horses, camels, donkeys, cattle, sheep, goats, and hogs, the advancing nomadic nations—the Aryans in the Indian Punjab, in the region of the Ganges,... had acquired possessions demanding only the most crude attention and care in order to propagate themselves in ever increasing numbers and yield the most abundant store of milk and meat. All former means of obtaining food were now forced to the background. Hunting, once a necessity, now became a sport.

'... slavery was also invented.... The human labour power at this stage does not yet produce a considerable amount over and above its cost of subsistence. But the introduction of cattle raising, metal industry, weaving and finally agriculture wrought a change.'<sup>8</sup>

Engels then describes the transformation of the matrilineal to the patrilineal family, which need not be discussed here. We would only refer to the list of the teachers given at the end of the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad* (6.5.1-4), where the descent of the sages is traced from the mother only. This indicates either a matrilineal family, or a stage in the evolution of the society in which the mother could be identified but not the father.

The question of slavery also cannot be discussed here, for that



would involve evidence from a much later age. There is no doubt that the slaves were regarded as a form of property in ancient India, but their role in economic life was limited by the operation of the caste system. This raises the question whether the *sudras* were originally slaves which we have discussed in a previous chapter. There is no evidence that a *sudra* was ever considered to be any one's property. It may be noted here that the *Taittiriya Samhita* (2.5.10.2) says: *pasukamah khalu vaisyo yayate* (Verily, the *vaisya*, desirous of cattle, sacrifices). The *Taittiriya Samhita* (2.3.7.1) also states the 'the gods having been defeated were reduced to the condition of being the *vaisyas of asuras* (*asuranam vaisyam upayan*)'. These are very early references to the *vaisyas*, and indicate that the formation of this class or caste was linked with cattle rearing, which at that stage of society was the only form of wealth. Cows then formed the communal property, so a group of men were needed to look after them, while the *kshatriyas* fought, and the *brahmanas* performed the religious ceremonies. Later the cows became privately owned property, and as we have stated above, question of inheritance arose. This is illustrated by a hymn in the *Rgveda* (III. 16.5) which states: 'Do not expose us, O Agni, to want of knowledge, to want of brave progeny, to want of cows, nor to slander....' Here the sage owns cows, and he desires sons to look after the herd, and to inherit them after his death.

The *vaisyas* became the custodians of property. Later when the cultivation of land began, the *vaisyas* acquired the monopoly over agriculture. Whether the *vaisyas* employed slaves to cultivate land is not known, but the probability is that they did not, for the Vedic literature also says that the *vaisyas* are numerous. It is, however, evident that they had to pay taxes.

The earliest Vedic civilization known to us belongs to this era. When Svetaketu's mother was compared with a cow, the reference was to an earlier age. Later, as we have said, different terms were used. The wife was called *ksetra* (land), the husband was called *ksetrin* (the owner of the land, that is, of the wife or of the widow), and the person appointed to produce offspring in a *niyoga* was called *bijin* (one who sows the seed) or *niyogin* (one who has been appointed). These are agricultural terms, indicating a society living on agriculture with a strong sense of pro-prietary right. In actual agricultural operation, a man who sows seeds in another person's land, cannot claim the crop.

So any child born or produced by the wife, must belong to the husband or proprietor. This was not an unsuitable doctrine at a stage in social evolution when land was plenty but labour scarce. As has been observed, it is significant that 'no Vedic text gives us the rule well known to other Indo-Germanic peoples that the adulterer taken in the act can be killed with impunity, though the later legal literature has traces of this rule.'<sup>10</sup> Indeed the *Dharmashastras* allowed bare maintenance even to an unchaste woman.<sup>11</sup>

In later Hindu society an adulterous woman would be driven out of the house,<sup>12</sup> for by that time marriage had become purely sacramental in character, an idea already evolved in the *Vedas*. The only secondary son allowed in the later Hindu society was an adopted son, an idea which did not find favour with Satyawati and Bhishma when they asked the widows of Vichitravirya to raise sons by *niyoga*, nor with Pandu when he practically forced his queens to do the same. The principle involved in both the cases seems to have been that a *ksetraja* son was better than an adopted son, a vestigial remnant of a conception that had lost its rationale.

Draupadi's marriage with five brothers, apparently held to be legal, may have been either a logical extension of the right of the brother-in-law or the reflection of a polyandrous practice which had all but died. It appears from the *Mbh* (12.39.5) that Draupadi's conduct had a precedent in another woman referred to as Gautami (the commentary explains that she was born in the Gautama family and was named Jatila). She also served many sages in the same manner as Draupadi served the Pandavas. It is also significant that the *Mbh* (13.72.6) mentions—'*ekapatnyas=ca yah striyah*' which has been correctly translated by R.N Dandekar as 'women who have one husband each'. This adjective implies that there were women who had a plurality of husbands, though not necessarily in the epic age.

In this connection two Vedic passages may be considered. The *Atharvaveda* (V.17.8-9) states: 'When a woman has at first even ten husbands, who are not *brahmanas*, if a *brahmana* takes hold of her hand (*i.e.* marries her), he alone is her (real) husband. A *brahmana* alone is (a real) husband, not a *kshatriya* or a *vaisya*—the sun goes proclaiming this to the five (tribes of) men'. The *Atharvaveda* again states (IX.5.27-28): 'Whatever woman, having first married one husbands, marries another, if they (two) offer a goat with five rich

dishes they would not be separated (from each other). The second husband secures the same world with his remarried wife, when he offers a goat accompanied with five rice dishes and with the light of fees.'

M.M. Kane has not attached much significance to these statements, and points out that the reference in the first passage to ten husbands is a *praudhivada* (pompous assertion or boast). The passage, according to him, 'may at the most mean' that if a *kshatriya* or *vaisya* widow marries a *brahmana* then the *brahmana* is to be considered as the real husband. As an alternative, M.M. Kane suggests that, the world *pati* may have been loosely used, all 'all that is meant may be that if a girl is promised to ten persons' and then to a *brahmana* 'the latter is to be accepted as the best'. The word *punarbhu* occurs in the second passage, which M.M. Kane holds to be decisive, and suggests that the reference here is to a betrothal, and after the death of the betrothed, marriage to another person. It is risky to differ from the Mahamahopadhyaya, particularly on the interpretation of Vedic passages. Still, we would suggest an alternative explanation.<sup>13</sup>

The first passage indicates a period when a woman could have more than one husband. Later, women were considered to be a kind of property, and the *brahmanas* claimed preference in matrimony, which resulted in the *anuloma* form of marriage. The second passage refers to the purchase of wife, the word *punarbhu* meaning 'a remarried woman'. These practices were obsolete even in the *Rgvedic* age, hence their solitary references in later texts become difficult to explain if one accepts the *Rgvedic* society as the standard. In *niyoga* also the *brahmanas* were preferred.

It is apparent from the *Vedas* and the epics that a man wanted a son. One of the reasons assigned for this desire is that the son offered *pinda* to a dead father, without which he would have gone to hell. Though this theory was known in the epic age, the varieties of *sraddha* described in the *Mbh* show that almost any relative could offer funeral oblations to a dead soul, and the performance of *sraddha* was quite different from what it became later? It is neither possible to describe the *sraddhas* performed in the *Mbh*, nor the origin of the ceremony here. 'It is, however, very remarkable, 'as M.M. Kane has pointed out, 'that the word "*sraddha*" itself does not occur in any undoubtedly authentic and ancient Vedic passage, though the *rite* called Pindapitryajna (performed on the *amavasya* of each month by an

*Ahitagni*), the Mahapitryajna (performed in the Caturmasya called *Sakamedha*) and the rites called Astakas were known to the early Vedic literature.<sup>14</sup> Confusion seems to have been created by the two meanings ascribed to the word *pitarah* in the Vedic literature; the word meant (1) a man's three immediate deceased ancestors, and (2) the early or ancient ancestors of the human race, semi-divine beings, who were supposed to inhabit a separate *loka* (world). It is necessary to point out that the *pinda* doctrine, based on the belief, that by offering balls of rice to his deceased ancestors, a man brings gratification to their souls, is against the doctrines of *karma*, *punarjanma* (re-birth) and *karmavipaka* (fruition of evil deeds).

Therefore, the hankering after a son seems partly, if not mainly, due to the desire of having a legal heir. Svetaketu's imposition of strict marriage vows, and its ready acceptance by the society indicate the emergence of private property and the need for a legal inheritor.

The *Mbh* gives three lists of sons. In 1.69.18, Sakuntala says that according to Manu, there are five types of sons, namely, from one's own wife, found, purchased, reared, and lastly, begotten on some woman other than wife. Pandu (in 1.111.27-29) gave another list of sons, namely, legitimate son, daughter's son, raised by levirate, illegitimate son born of a maiden whose father is not known, widow's son, son born to a maiden before marriage but declared at the time of marriage, son born to a woman of loose morals, purchased, a person who approaches a man and begs to be adopted, relative's son, wife's son who is of adult age at the time of marriage, and lastly, a son begotten on a woman of lower caste.

Another list is given by Bhishma (13.49.3.28). This list includes legitimate son, *nirukta* (born of levirate), *prasrtaja* (born to the wife by a man not recommended by the husband), begotten by a fallen man on his wife, adopted, purchased, received together with the bride (*i.e.* born of a maiden who was pregnant at the time of marriage), son of an unmarried girl: besides these, there were six *apadhvamsajas* and six *apasadas* who were born of *anuloma* and *pratiloma* unions respectively.<sup>15</sup> Bhishma then adds (13.49.3, 26-28) that these were all to be regarded as sons and could not be rejected.

In spite of his high sense of morality, Manu (9.158-160) also recognizes ten kinds of sons, which correspond to the lists given above.

Other *Dharmashastras* also recognize them. M.M. Kane after discussing thoroughly the various texts on this subject states: 'These very *smritis* (like Gautama, Vasistha, Narada) that are very harsh on women for adultery allow the *gudhaja*, *kanina*, and *sahodha* to be secondary sons. So the only way in which these two attitudes can be reconciled is by holding that when the husband condones moral lapses on the part of the woman whom he had accepted as his wife, the *smritis* provide for the maintenance, guardianship and succession of such offspring of illicit connection.'<sup>16</sup>

This explanation is no doubt reasonable, but it is also possible that the *Dharmashastra* writers, in spite of their personal inclination being against it, had to include the traditional list of sons. Nobody in later age would marry a girl who was already a mother or was pregnant, but such marriages would have been possible in the society prevailing in Svetaketu's time, and in Madra, Bahlika and Uttarakuru in the epic age.

In other parts of the country, which may be called more advanced, such practices had fallen into desuetude. Kunti kept her pregnancy and birth of Karna a secret, and discarded him as soon as he was born. She must have been certain that her future husband would not accept a *kanina* or *gudhotpanna*<sup>17</sup> son, and that her conduct would be censured even by her father. Later she raised children by *niyoga* at the request of her husband, but other statements in the *Mbh* (1.173.1-2; 2.28.23) show that the practice of *niyoga* was attracting criticism. The institution of *niyoga* seems to have arisen at a time, when men, frustrated in their desire to have a son, could not get any by adoption, because no one of a good family would have willingly parted with his child, particularly a son. Only example of adoption in the *Mbh* is that of Kunti, but she later blamed her father for giving her away in adoption. Even Kunti's adoption was not quite proper, for according to *Dharmashastra* rule, only a son could be adopted.

The situation, which led to the recognition of various kinds of sons, seems to have been somewhat analogous to that of medieval Europe of which J.D. Schumpeter writes: 'In fact until the middle of the 18th century ... a numerous and increasing population was the most important *symptom* of wealth; it was the chief *cause* of wealth; it was wealth itself—the greatest asset for any nation to have... What was the economic rationale of all this, if indeed economic analysis had anything

to do with it at all? The answer should be obvious. The analytic complement of the populationist attitude boils down to one proposition: *under prevailing conditions*, increase in heads would increase real income per head. And the proposition was manifestly correct.<sup>18</sup>

We have to substitute 'family' or 'society' for nation, in order to realize the rationale behind legalizing illegitimate issues. As soon as the economic conditions changed, their recognition was withdrawn. Changed conditions had crystallized the idea of property, and rights of possession. For women a new set of moral values arose. They had to remain strictly chaste; henceforth, it was to be their prime virtue. Sita was the ideal *pativrata*; the *Mbh* contains the story of Savitri (3.277 to 283), and at several other places sings the eulogy of the *pativrata*.

The creation of surplus wealth both by agriculture and rural craftsmen led into more developed forms of economic organization and ushered an urban culture. It was now necessary to define 'possession' or '*bhakti*'. The *Srauta-sutras* do not provide rules on *bhakti*, but beginning from Gautama, the *Dharmasutras* provide detailed rules on *bhakti*. The epics do not deal with the topic either, but as stated above, the *Mbh* (12.164.12) states that according to Brihaspati, four modes of *artha-siddhi* (legal acquisition giving right of possession) are: (1) *paramparya*, (2) *daiva*, (3) *kamya*, and (4) *maitra*.<sup>19</sup> According to the *Gautamadharmasutra* (X.39), a man become an owner by (1) inheritance, (2) purchase, (3) partition, (4) seizure (appropriation of forest trees and other things which have no owner), and (5) finding (*i.e.* appropriation of a property the owner of which is unknown). The *kamya* of the *Mbh* is practically purchase, and *daiva* (chance) may mean appropriation of ownerless or unclaimed property. As will be shown later the *Mbh* 13.108.12 provides for partition. The *Mbh* rule, said to be a quotation from Brihaspati, is less precise than Gautama's, just as the latter is less detailed than the later *Dharmashastra* works which deal with the subject in much greater detail and thoroughness.<sup>19</sup> It is apparent, however, that the society had already reached a stage of development when some proof of possession was necessary.

The *Nirukta* (3.4-5) shows that long before Yaska (c. 800 B.C.) heated controversies had raged on various questions of inheritance such as the exclusion of daughter by sons and the rights of the appointed daughter (*putrika*).<sup>20</sup> But from Gautama onwards begins the prolonged dispute among the *Dharmashastras* as to which of the various kinds

of sons (mentioned above) are entitled to a share in the deceased's property.<sup>21</sup> Several authorities give some of the illegitimate issues a share in their dead 'father's property while others give only maintenance. We have seen that Bhisma was of the opinion that the right of even the illegitimate sons could not be denied altogether.

This conflict indicates a shift in the moral values, but also seems to have had a material basis. Land and cows were no longer as abundant as they formerly were, and men naturally wanted to restrict their inheritors to among his legitimate sons. Another reason may have been that later it became customary for a king to escheat the property of a person dying sonless, hence the kings were interested in shortening the list of secondary sons until only the adopted son remained.

A related dispute of the *Dharmashastras* was regarding the right of the eldest son to a special share in his father's property.<sup>22</sup> The *Mbh* (13.108.1-9) assigns a supervisory role to the eldest son over his younger brothers and states that 'if the younger uterine brothers are sinful they have no claim to property, (but) the eldest brother should not appropriate (the dead fathers property) without giving their shares to the younger brothers' (13.108.10). This is followed by two interesting provisions which indicate that, profit earned by an individual member of a joint family could not be claimed by other coparceners, including brothers.

Bhisma says that 'if the eldest brother by his own efforts earns money by going to a foreign country (*jangha-sramaphalo* 'dhvagah) he need not distribute his earnings to his younger brothers.<sup>23</sup> If there is a common demand for partition among sons (*saha utthanam*) then the father should distribute the property among them in equal shares.' (13.108.11-12).

The first verse definitely points to commercial ventures, and shows that the society had reached a stage when the interests of the enterprising brother had to be protected. The second verse embodies the wellknown provision of the Hindu Law, which was later adopted by Yajnavalkya and developed in the *Mitaksara* commentary. This provision had far-reaching social and economic consequences, one of which was that, if the sons wanted to start independent ventures, they could obtain some capital by forcing the father to divide the property and thus fulfilled one of Gautama's criterion of '*bhakti*' mentioned above.

It is apparent, therefore, that the *Mbh* provided the legal basis for private commercial enterprise. The reason was that trade and commerce had developed to an extent that such laws were necessary to protect the interests of the merchants on whose prosperity the kings depended for replenishing their treasury.

Inheritance had two sides: it could be an asset or a liability. All the 'secondary sons' would have liked to share the deceased's assets, but would they care to shoulder the burden of liabilities? Indeed, would it have been possible to render them legally liable for their putative father's debts? This was another factor which seems to have fostered the right of the legitimate son.

Various passages in the Vedic literature show that there was a firm belief that a man was under obligation to gods and *pitrs* which had to be discharged by *yajna* (Vedic sacrifices), and the procreation of a son. Later Vedic literature developed the theory of three *rnas* (debts which one owed to gods, *pitrs*, and sages, the last to be discharged by Vedic study. The *Mbh* (1.111.12), however, holds that there are four *rnas*, namely, the three mentioned above, and another to 'humanity in general' to be discharged by goodness to all. Later (13.37.17) Bhishma adds a fifth debt, towards guests, which was to be discharged by hospitality.

The word *rna* was used in the examples cited above as a spiritual debt, but from very ancient time a secular connotation was attached to the word, and *rna* also meant an ordinary debt. This double meaning imposed a religious sanction to a monetary transaction, and the religious and legal obligation to discharge his father's debt devolved on the son. Later authorities like Narada (*Vyavaharapada*, I, 6-9) and Katyayana (551, 591) predict the most horrible ordeal for the soul of a man who dies without discharging his debts. These authoritative imprecations, intended to compel a son to pay his dead father's debts, protected the interests of the moneylender.

Thus the creditor passed his unrealized investments to his son as assets, just as the debtor passed his debts to his son as legal liabilities. The result would be the accumulation of capital on the one hand, and progressive pauperization on the other. The situation was further aggravated by the caste law according to which only a *vaisya* could be a moneylender.



This socioeconomic law had been in operation possibly for one thousand years or even more when the epics were written. The *vaisyas* had by this time consolidated their position, but the epics being mostly concerned with *kshatriya* princes, we do not hear of the *vaisyas*. But the *Jataka* stories present us with the pictures of extremely wealthy merchants, who must have belonged to the *vaisya* community. It is a remarkable fact, that both Buddhism and Jainism owed their rapid popularity partly due to the solid support they received from the merchant community. Today the Jaina community is practically a business community and has been so for 700 to 800 years, if not more.

### REFERENCES

1. See *Rgveda* III, 16.5 quoted below.
2. Quoted in Kane, *op. cit.*, II. p. 606.
3. From its description in the *Mbh* (6.8.2-13) and the *Ram* (4.42), Uttarakuru appears to be a mythical country, but it probably meant the trans-Himalayan region, and originally included Tibet and also Eastern Turkestan beyond which the monkeys were forbidden to proceed in search of Sita (4.42.57). M.M. Kane, who thinks that the Svetaketu episode cannot be relied upon, dismisses Uttarakuru as 'more or less mythical'; Kane *op. cit.*, II, p. 428. But we do not think so. Mythical, description of many real countries are available in Sanskrit texts including the epics. Secondly, polyandry still prevails among the Khasas in the Jaunsar Bawar District of Uttar Pradesh, and among the peoples of Lahaul, Kinnaur, and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh indicating the continuity of an ancient custom.
4. Mahismati is modern Mahesvara or Mahesh on the right bank of the Narmada, forty miles to the south of Indore. For details see N.L. De: *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India*, London, 1927; H.C. Raychaudhury, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1950, p. 145, f.n. 2.
5. Madra was a region in the Punjab between the Ravi and the Chenab. Bahlika is sometimes taken to be a part of Madra, but the geographical boundaries of the Bahlika country as given in the *Mbh* 8.30.10-11 indicate that the country was not a part of Aryavarta. *Mbh* 8.30.62, distinguishes the people of Matsya, Kuru, Pancala, Naimisa, and Cedi (*i.e.* Aryavarta heartland) from Madra and Pancanada people who are said to be crooked. *Mbh* 8.30.60-62 indicate that Madra and Bahlika people were grouped together for their ignorance of good customs. It may be mentioned here that Vinasana mentioned in *Mbh* 9.36.2 is generally identified with the desert in Ambala and Sirhind (in Punjab) where the river Sarasvati is believed to have disappeared. Manu (2.21) mentions Vinasana as the

western boundary of Madhyadesa, while Patanjali in the *Mahabhasya* (on Panini 2.4.10; 6.3.10) refers to it as the western boundary of Aryavarta. The Sarasvati marked the dividing line between the Brahmanic and the non-Brahmanic people, or outsiders like the Bahlikas. It is suggested in the *Mbh* (3.80.118; 3.130.3-5) that the river Sarasvati disappeared at the very gate of the kingdom of Nisada.

It may be mentioned here that Savitri, one of the ideal *pativratas*, was the daughter of the king of Madra (*Mbh* 3.277.5) and a Malava princess (3.277.22). The Kuru kings had matrimonial relations with both the Madra and the Bahlika royal families.

6. During the sacrifice the Pratiprasthatri goes to the sacrificer's wife sitting near the garhapatya and asks her to declare what lover or lovers (*jara*) she has. She either declares the names of her lovers or lifts up (if she feels shame in the declaration) as many blades from the bunch of *darbhās* lying on the ground as the number of lovers she has had.' Kane, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 1097-98.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 619.
8. Frederick Engels: *The Origin of the Family*, translated by Ernest Untermann, Chicago, 1902, pp. 65-7.
9. Translated by H.D. Velankar, *Rgveda Mandala III*, Bombay, 1968. See also *Rgveda*, VII, 1.9.11-19.
10. A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Reprint, Varanasi, 1958, I, p. 480.
11. See Kane, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 571-73; III, 803-04.
12. The Kalivarya texts permitted abandonment of women guilty of relation with a man of lower caste, but a mother could never be abandoned; *ibid.*, III, pp. 948-49.
13. Vedic passages and the *Dharmashastra* rules are interpreted according to the Purva-Mimamsa rules of interpretation, and M.M. Kane, among modern writers on *Dharmashastra*, was the greatest Purva-Mimamsa scholar. But all the Vedas were composed before the Purva-Mimamsa rules were formulated, hence it is possible to interpret Vedic passages empirically when the occasion demands it. Secondly, the Mahamhopadhyaya had not taken into consideration here the examples from the *Mbh* which we have cited. See Kane, *op. cit.*, II, p. 614-15.
14. Kane, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 349.
15. *Apadhvamsajas* and *apasadas* were really *varna-sankara* sons.
16. Kane, *op. cit.*, III, p. 653. For *gudhaja* etc. see below note 36.
17. The *kanina* (maiden's son) is one whom a maiden bears secretly in the house of her father; the child belongs to him who marries her later. *Gudhotpanna* or *gudhaja* is the son born in a man's house, the child's begetter being unknown; he belonged to him of whose wife he was born.

The son born of a maiden pregnant at the time of marriage is called *sahodha*, he too belonged to the husband. It may be noted that when dealing with these illegitimate children the *Dharmashastra* writers invariably refer to the 'son'. It is nowhere stated as to what happened to an illegitimate daughter. One of the reasons for this omission is, that the secondary sons are usually mentioned in connection with the partition of property to which daughters usually had no share.

18. J.D. Schumpeter: *History of Economic Analysis*, London, 1961, p. 251. To Plato and Aristotle the problems was more of over-population.
19. The *Gautama dharma-sutra* is probably the earliest *dharma-sutra*. M.M. Kane has placed the *Gautama-Dharmasutra* between 600-400 B.C., Kane, *op. cit.*, 1, 2nd ed., 1968, p. 36. Among some special matters presented by Gautama are: (1) Only such usages of countries, castes, and families are valid and authoritative as are not opposed to the *Vedas*; (2) Women are not independent as regards the performance of religious duties, that a woman is to be married before she reaches puberty, that a guardian who does not arrange for a girl's marriage incurs sin, and that a girl after waiting for three menstrual periods should herself choose a qualified person and return the ornaments given to her by her father's family; (3) *niyoga* was permitted if the husband died childless. The *Mbh* does not support any of these rules except the last. Whether Gautama is earlier than Manu and/or the *Mbh* is debatable.
20. A sonless man could appoint his daughter as *putrika*, and her son by marriage, known as *putrika-putra*, belonged to her father, as a secondary son.
21. For details see Kane, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 650-53.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 621-31.
23. The word '*jangha*' means the 'portion of the leg from ankle to the knee'. Kautilya 2.1.7 has used the word *jangha-kariko* to mean 'a courier'. Therefore, *jangha-srama-phalo* '*dhvagah*' should mean 'profit made by one who travels', that is an 'itinerant merchant'.

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**2005, Size-Demy,**

Jacket Design by J.M.S. Rawat



*Sarup & Sons*

**PUBLISHERS**

4740/23, ANSARI ROAD, DARYA GANJ, NEW DELHI-110002

PHONES: 23281029, 23244664, 51010989

FAX: 011-23277098

e-mail: sarupandsonsin@hotmail.com

ISBN 81-7625-537-8



9 788176 255370

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